

THE VOTER

JULY 2019

Meet the Board!



Barbara Caddell



Jean Jonnson



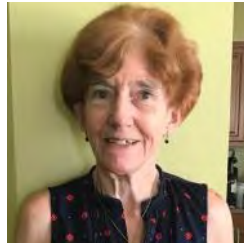
Joi Travis



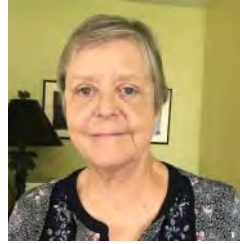
Kristen De La Fuente



Kathy Jones



Robin Buckelew



Trinka Hastings



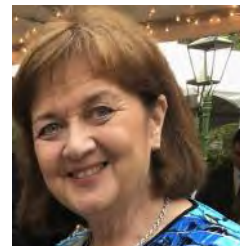
Marie "Vette" Hawkins



Carol Prickett



Stephen Stetson



Mary Anne Wilson

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The Board Goes to the Beach

On June 28-30, your board went to the beach for a much-needed retreat. We bonded, made plans for the upcoming two years, and divided up some of the responsibilities for making our plans a reality. Thanks to Jean Johnson, the perfect hostess who offered the use of two condos, Myra Evans, facilitator extraordinaire, and Catherine Cotten, our liaison to the LWWUS Board, for making our gathering a productive but fun one! You will see some of our plans later on in this Voter!

Barbara Caddell - President

Barbara joined the Montgomery League in 1976. She was attracted to the League's thoughtful, fact-based approach to issues and its advocacy when a position was taken. Like most state board members, she started as an active local league member, serving in a variety of roles: researcher, Voter editor, Vote411 coordinator, environmental advocacy coordinator, treasurer, president, and co-president. She has been on the LWVAL Board since 2013, serving as membership-leadership coordinator and Vote411 coordinator, before agreeing to be president in 2017. Barbara is a retired social worker with Mobile County Public Schools. She has agreed to learn more about social media and will need to be held accountable. As president, she is the official spokesperson for the LWVAL and is responsible for organizing and encouraging League activities.

Jean Johnson – First Vice-President

Since joining the League in 1995, Jean has served in various league positions, including as website editor, communications / social media director, LWV Greater Birmingham president, and LWVAL co-president. She is looking forward to continuing service as LWVAL 1st VP.

Jean enjoys genealogy, reading, traveling with her family, all things “geekie”, and training for the past 25 years in World Oyama Karate, a full-contact classical Japanese style of the martial arts.

Joi Travis – Second Vice-President & Voter Service Chair

A native of Cleveland, Ohio, Joi holds a B.A. in Political Science from Alabama State University and an M.S. in Public Administration, with an emphasis in Public Policy, from Auburn University in Montgomery. Joi also earned a J.D. from Birmingham School of Law. In 2017 she became licensed to practice law in Alabama and launched Travis Law, LLC.

Joi is Vice President of the Metro Birmingham NAACP. She is a Board Member for the Birmingham School of Law Foundation, the State Executive Committee for The Alabama Sierra Club and the Friends of the Birmingham Public Library Board of Directors. She is also a member of The Shelby/Jefferson County ASU Alumni Association, The Alabama and Birmingham Bar Associations, the Greater Birmingham Criminal Defense Lawyers Association, the Alabama United Negro College Fund and of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.,

Kristen De La Fuente – Treasurer

Kristen joined the LWV in 2006 in Upstate New York as treasurer for the LWV of Geneva. Upon relocating to Auburn, she began attending LWV of East Alabama meetings and joined in 2009. Her roles with the East Alabama League include vice-president (2010-2012), treasurer (2012-2013), president (2013-2017), and treasurer again (2017-present). She currently serves as treasurer for the LWV of Alabama and has done so since 2015. Kristen's other league activities include managing local Vote411 details, hosting social activities in Auburn such as Hot Topics Lunches, and chairing the new Membership Development Grant Committee for LWVAL.

Kathy Jones - Secretary & Centennial Committee Chair

Kathy is a retired project manager and systems engineer, living in Huntsville, AL. She is a relatively new League member, joining in 2017 when she reached out to the LWVAL to start a Member at Large Unit in North Alabama. She is president of the new Tennessee Valley League. Kathy is honored to be serving as Secretary for the next two years. She will also serving as chair of the Centennial Committee and support the Voter Services Committee, especially in the area of Voter Rights Restoration.

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Robin Buckelew – Review all LWVAL program items & make recommendations for change

Robin is a retired civilian Army engineer. She enjoys working in the yard, volunteering to help build Habitat houses, and spending time with family and friends. Robin sees the League of Women Voters as an agent of positive change in Alabama and the U.S., and looks forward to being a part of it.

Trinka Hastings – Voter Service Committee

Katherine (Trinka) is a member of the LWVBC and has served as Voter Services Chair and as a board member. She lives in Fairhope with her husband, Bob. Together they enjoy canoeing, gardening, and supporting the Friends Meeting (Quakers). Katherine was a teacher of visually impaired students in Mobile and Baldwin County for 23 years.

Maria “Vette” Hawkins

Maria is a Jacksonville State University graduate. She retired from the U.S. Postal Service and from U.S. Army Reserve as a Master Sergeant. Maria is married to Sylvester Hawkins and has three children: Sylvester D, Terrance and Kamesha Hawkins. She is also Grandma to Sylvester B. and Terra. Maria is a member of Rising Star Baptist Church.

Carol Prickett – Communicate & coordinate activities with local leagues, review educational materials

Carol joined LWVGT after retiring from the faculty of The University of Alabama, where she developed and led the music therapy degree program. A fifth generation Alabamian, she believes Alabama's future depends on including and empowering all of our citizens in political decisions at all levels.

Stephen Stetson – Fundraising Chair

Stephen joined the LWVAL Board in 2019. He is a Senior Campaign Representative covering Alabama, Mississippi and Georgia for the Sierra Club, America's oldest and largest environmental organization. His work focuses on retiring dirty coal and fossil fueled power plants while bringing clean energy and green jobs to the Southeast. He is an attorney and a lobbyist, and also serves on the Board of Directors for the Alabama Rivers Alliance. He is excited about the League's credible and nonpartisan reputation, and looks forward to further energizing its work on democracy and electoral issues. He lives in Montgomery with his wife, Kate Shuster, their dog and two cats.

Mary Anne Wilson – Voter Service Committee & Vote411 Coordinator

Mary Anne joined the League of Women Voters of Mobile in 2011. She has been active in many of the Mobile League projects, including serving on the Bylaws Committee, Observer Corps Chair, Budget Committee Chair and most recently as President. She lives in Mobile, her native city, and looks forward to working with LWVAL Board members on issues at the state level and getting to know many more League members throughout Alabama.

President's Message

Submitted by Barbara Caddell

As I reflect on the past two years, I am proud of our accomplishments as a League. We have protected the vote and defended democracy in a variety of ways: helping returning citizens restore their voting rights; registering thousands of voters; holding candidate informational meetings; participating in lawsuits; submitting statements in support of league positions; and contacting state legislators about bills. We hosted two powerful state-wide meetings: the 2018 Council in Birmingham and 2019 Convention in Tuscaloosa. Both had wonderful attendance and featured an impressive array of speakers/panelists on important issues, including the environment and environmental justice, civil asset forfeiture, voter suppression, education, health care, and public transit.

Now we have begun our efforts for the 2019-2020 term. We have much to do. Plans for the Centennial Celebration of both women's suffrage and the creation of the League of Women Voters are underway – details are included in this newsletter. With the upcoming 2020 primaries and general election before us, plans are also underway for candidate events as well as Vote411. Coupled with our candidate information will be efforts to register as many voters as possible and to work with citizens on voting rights restoration. Remember to sign up your local league for National Voter Registration Day (<https://nationalvoterregistrationday.org/partner-2019-sign-up/>) In all our work, we will be intentional to increase our diversity, equity, and inclusion. We will try to expand our reach within the state, especially to areas that do not yet have a local league.

Although our plans sound ambitious, our work is essential. The League is as needed today as it was 100 years ago. Our non-partisan and thoughtful approach to issues makes us stand out in this hyper-partisan political landscape. We must continue to encourage informed and active participation in government, to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and to influence public policy through education and advocacy—to make democracy work for all.

Help Wanted: Voter Editor

Would you like to put your creative energy to good use? Editor for The Voter might be just what you're looking for!

Responsibilities include formatting and editing content. Knowledge of publishing software will be helpful, but not required. The Voter is currently produced using in Microsoft Publisher and Adobe Acrobat.

Contact Barbara Caddell at caddellh@comcast.net if you are interested.

Centennial Committee Submitted by Kathy Jones

The LWVAL is excited to be a co-chair of the Alabama Women's Suffrage Centennial Committee, along with the Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH) and the Alabama Bar Association. This committee is currently in the process of planning state-wide events for 2020 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment.

At the 2019 LWVAL Convention, there was a general consensus that in addition to supporting the Alabama Women's Suffrage Centennial Committee, LWVAL and local leagues need to have their own projects that celebrate the Centennial of the League of Women Voters and the 19th Amendment which gave women the right to vote. To carry out the direction from the Convention, the Centennial Committee was established to develop and implement the LWVAL's Centennial projects while encouraging collaboration between Alabama's local leagues for centennial related activities. This committee will also provide support for the work of the state-wide Suffrage Centennial Committee.

During the recent State Board's Strategic Planning meeting, several ideas for LWVAL 2020 centennial celebration projects and activities were presented. The following three projects were selected by the Board:

- Support the *National Votes for Women Trail*. League members will work with the Alabama Votes for Women Trail Coordinator at ADAH to research and identify sites that have a history with the women's suffrage movement in Alabama. Volunteers will enter information into a comprehensive database that will be used to populate an interactive nationwide map representing a more complete story of the struggle for women's suffrage.
- Host a Day of Service on 2/14/20. LWVUS will develop plans for a Day of Service on 2/14/20 with theme "Women Power the Vote". Details on the goals and activities for this event will be provided in the coming months.
- Host an Equali"Tea". This could include an educational event to focus on issues of concern in Alabama or a gathering to honor a significant league leader in the state.

The Centennial Committee Chair is Kathy Jones (LWVAL Board Secretary) and the Vice-Chair is Yvonne Brakefield Knowles (LWV Greater Birmingham). Each local league and MAL unit is invited to name two members to this "off-board" State level Committee.

If your league is interested in participating on this LWVAL Centennial Committee, please send names and contact information for up to two of your members to Yvonne Brakefield Knowles (LWVGB) at ybrakefield@mac.com. ***If possible, League presidents are requested to provide names of committee members by no later than 7/31/2019.***

We look forward to working with your local leagues to celebrate the women's suffrage movement!

LWVAL Convention Wrap-Up

Convention 2019 in Tuscaloosa featured both organizational business and information about a topic of interest to our organization: environmental justice. We started having fun the Friday night before the business meeting with a cocktail reception at the Bryant Museum hosted by the Tuscaloosa League. Saturday was power-packed with business and information; it finished with a transparency celebration honoring editorial writer Kyle Whitmire. Mr Whitmire's presentation and willingness just to "hang out" and answer questions endeared him to attendees. On Sunday we finalized business and provided feedback for future board actions and activities.

The following directions to the board were offered

1. Encourage each local league to provide representative to Centennial Committee (see attached report) for planning state-wide Centennial events/projects
2. We need long-term, mid-term, and short-term planning. Need feedback from members for this.
3. Collect ideas on dealing with generous donation by Ruth Wright
4. Improve communication among leagues (even though there was no consensus on state-wide availability of league members' contact information)
5. Use current election cycle as well as Centennial events to expand league presence throughout the state in areas where we do not have a presence

Business items included the election of officers and directors, adoption of areas of program emphasis (but no new studies), the adoption of budgets (giving the board the latitude to amend the budgets as necessary to cover costs of program areas of emphasis as adopted), and the presentation of various awards. No new studies or bylaws changes were adopted.

The informational portion of convention featured luncheon speaker Catherine Coleman Flowers, environmental justice advocate from the Black Belt who inspired us to take action in support of Alabama's forgotten people. She was followed by three panels on: the North Birmingham corruption and contamination scandal, the "sacrifice zones" created by pollution and contamination which impacts all of us but especially in low income communities, and the dangers posed to low income communities (and the rest of us) by climate change and sea level rise. See a "live stream" of the program on our Facebook page and look on our webpage for more information about the panels and speakers. <https://convention2019.lwval.org/speakers/>

The following awards were presented:

Phyllis Rea Membership Awards for percentages of increase in membership:

Small League Award Recipient: LWV Tennessee Valley

Large League Award Recipient: LWV Greater Birmingham

Jane Katz Public Service Award for strengthening democracy

Alabama Voting Rights Project – for restoring voting rights to returning citizens

Joyce Woodworth Memorial for outstanding work in League Program

Nancy Ekberg for her work on state constitutional reform and public transit

Transparency in Government Award

Kyle Whitmire for his reporting focused on lack of transparency in Alabama's government

*Thank
you!*

Convention 2019 was a huge success thanks to the hard work of a lot of people:

- Kim Bailey and the Tuscaloosa Leaguers who made arrangements and kept things moving smoothly,
- Kathy Jones who coordinated things and took minutes,
- Kristen de la Fuente who has kept the records (money and registrations and name tags) straight,
- Haley Lewis and Robyn Hyden who put together an amazing array of environmental justice speakers and helped publicize our event on Facebook,
- Joyce Lanning, Cindy Lowry, and Leonette Slay who moderated panels
- Anne Permaloff who kept us “in line” with parliamentary procedure
- Jean Johnson who edited and formatted our convention booklet and did any number of unassigned tasks
- Board members who went "above and beyond".



LWVUS Council Wrap-Up

Barbara Caddell and Joi Travis attended LWVUS Council (June 20-23), a biennial national meeting focused on educating league leaders. We enjoyed the opportunity to make connections as well as receive training. Here is a partial list of the trainings offered:

- Organizational dynamics – how bias influences organizational function, how to make boards work more effectively;
- Importance of data in our work and how to use it effectively;
- Cultivating, improving, and capitalizing on relationships with the media - crafting and using our message;
- Legal issues around being non-partisan – what you can do may not be what you should do;
- Strategies to improve our impact;
- Ways to protect the league’s reputation and “brand” in these hyper-partisan times.

Finally, former LWVUS President Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins described the role of women of color in the suffrage movement and connected it to our current DEI efforts. You will be hearing more about Centennial events as well as DEI all year.

Southern Women and Suffrage Submitted by Connie Arnwine

Next year, as we commemorate the 100th anniversary of passage of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, we will honor the courageous women who fought for over seven decades for the right to vote. We sometimes forget that winning the vote for women was a long and contentious fight and some view this fight as ushering in a cultural and political revolution that has continued to the present. The first coordinated women's suffrage event was the Women's Right Convention held in Seneca Falls, NY, July 1848. For almost seven decades afterwards, women engaged in many forms of activism and civil disobedience to gain full voting privileges. They marched, held vigils, picketed and went to jail. But what about the women who opposed the woman's vote? Certainly, as far as we know, they never engaged in the level of organized public protests as the suffragists, but many worked very diligently to prevent their own sex from achieving the right to vote. It's noteworthy that seven of the ten states that failed to ratify the 19th Amendment at the time were southern states and many in the national suffrage movement wrote-off the South as a lost cause. After all, it was southern politicians who had for many years prevented the passage of a federal suffrage amendment in Congress. So what motivated some southern women to take positions that were antithetical to their own best interests?

The social reform movement of the Progressive Era helped to kick start both the suffragist and anti-suffragist movement in the South. Historians point out that the South's hostility to suffrage was connected to other social and cultural upheavals of the time, such as the calls for social reforms in child labor, compulsory education and regulation of working conditions in industry. The two dominant industries in the South opposed to social reform were the liquor industry and textile industry. Industrial leaders saw both the progressive movement and the suffrage movement as special threats. Club women 'do-gooders' seeking to bring 'unreasonable' reforms could damage their lucrative industries particularly if they had the vote. They viewed many of these reform-minded women as being involved with the suffrage movement although this was not always the case. The textile industry issued special welfare editions of their Southern Textile Bulletin to convince club women of their benevolent support for their employees. At the same time, they joined with other industrialists to covertly provide money and political support to the anti-suffrage cause. All through the battle years, suffragists accused the liquor interests of bankrolling the anti movement, but they were never able to clearly prove their accusations.

According to historians, southern women were ten to fifteen years behind the North in developing the social club movement. Women in the North had many years in the public eye to overcome social and gender stereotypes and to hone their organizational skills, but southern women were just beginning to take up organizing skills in the 1900s. Likewise, anti-suffrage organizations developed much later in the South than suffrage organizations. One reason given for anti-suffrage women being slow to organize was because there was no real concern or sense of urgency in the South that suffrage could become a reality until passage of a federal amendment became more likely after 1913. Many anti-suffragists still adhered to their traditional gender roles and were reluctant to assume the responsibility and work required for organizing a large scale social movement. Historians point out that southern anti-suffrage networks were also looser in structure, most with just one active leader and there were fewer archival records from the southern anti-suffrage organizations such as membership rosters, minutes or financial records while the suffrage movement felt compelled to archive almost all its activities. Overall the anti-suffragists published few journals or newspapers and none were the quality of what the suffrage movement produced.

The South, more so than any other region of the country, adhered to the stereotypical roles defining

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Southern Women and Suffrage—cont'd

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men and women well into the 20th Century. The women's suffrage movement was born in the North and aligned with the abolitionist movement. Many in the South could not, would not forget that. They saw the women's suffrage movement as an assault on the South's traditional values and a threat to their long held belief in the sanctity of state's rights. After reconstruction, the South created and perpetuated the myth that the South's culture was superior to that of the North. The North was vilified as materialistic and atheistic as opposed to the God fearing, patriotic South. Anti-suffragists took every opportunity to contrast their demure and saintly roles with that of those 'anarchists' and 'tools of feminism'. Ministers reminded women of Paul's admonishment for women to be submissive, telling them their place was in the home not the statehouse. Politicians reminded them that their delicate constitutions could not stand up to the rigors of being in the public sphere. Even the medical community warned women that taxing their brains could damage their reproductive organs. It is no wonder that many women succumbed to such pressure particularly when their financial livelihoods depended on their husbands or male relatives. There were many women who, no doubt, sincerely believed that both civic reform and voting were unwomanly.

While some anti-suffrage women were willing to give speeches or go into the statehouses to lobby, most of their oppositional activities were carried out discreetly in their homes where they worked behind the scene holding teas or dinners to meet with power brokers. They were very vocal in pointing out they did not need to 'sully' themselves by going into the streets. The reluctance of the antis to take the public stage was a major difference between the antis and the suffragists. The anti-suffragists espoused the sanctity of the home and motherhood and shunned the public tactics of the suffragists, particularly the more "militant" tactics of the Women's Party headed by Alice Paul. In a letter to a joint session of the Alabama legislature in 1919, the executive committee of Alabama Women's Anti-Ratification League expressed their opposition to ratification of the 19th Amendment: "We are not politicians nor political debaters (sic) and we seek no laurels upon the hustings nor upon the floor of this House. We are home keepers and the mothers of children, and we seek to discharge our duty to our country and to the cause of civilization and right living, not by voting and holding office, but by making homes in which love and peace and happiness dwell . . .". ([Letter from the executive committee of the Alabama Woman's Anti-Ratification League to a joint session of the Alabama legislature.](#))

Another barrier faced by both the suffragists and the antis was indifference to the movement. Susan B. Anthony complained in the 1880s that "in the indifference, the inertia, the apathy of women lies the greatest obstacle to their enfranchisement." ([The Women's Rights Movement, 1848-1920](#)). The anti-suffrage movement was able to use the alleged indifference to suffrage to their advantage. They regularly pointed to the low membership numbers in the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) as evidence that women do not want enfranchisement. In the [aforementioned letter](#) to the Alabama Legislature, the anti-ratification members state they are "representatives of the wishes and views of more than eighty per cent of the white women of Alabama." The Anti-Ratification League later claimed they would support state regulated enfranchisement when a majority of women support it.

One of the most active anti-suffrage organizations in the South was the Alabama Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, claiming 1500 members in 1916. Their motto was "Home Rule, State's Rights, and White Supremacy." (Green, p108) After Congress passed the 19th Amendment, the or-

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Southern Women and Suffrage—cont'd

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ganization renamed itself the Southern Women's Anti- Ratification League and relocated from Selma to Montgomery to actively campaign against the amendment. The main activity of the Anti-Ratification League was to produce and distribute anti-suffrage literature across the South. However, their president, Nina Pinckard, Montgomery, was very outspoken. She would become one of the most highly visible anti- suffrage women in the South because she was one of the few antis who enjoyed giving public speeches. She traveled throughout the South and was a pivotal figure in the final battle for ratification which took place in Tennessee during the summer of 1920. Pinckard was no shrinking violet. While in Tennessee, she pursued criminal libel and slander charges against a suffragist she accused of slandering her by saying Pinckard received money from the liquor lobby.

Keep in mind, from the very beginning, the suffrage movement was never a completely unified movement. This was particularly true in the South where, in the 1900s, there two competing suffrage movements with very different strategies. The larger group of southern suffragists were allied with NAWSA led by Carrie Catt and supported a federal amendment. The other suffrage group, the Southern States Woman Suffrage Conference (SSWSC), was headed by Kate Gordon (from Louisiana), who opposed a federal amendment. The motto of the SSWSC was "Make the Southern States White." She maintained that setting voter qualifications was a right given to the states by the constitution and, as such, state legislatures could limit voting to white women through a state amendment. This debate may have kept some women on the sidelines not knowing which organization to support. Initially both Gordon and her friend Laura Clay from Kentucky were very active in the national suffrage movement even holding offices. Eventually the women's unyielding refusal to support a federal amendment alienated them from NAWSA. Once Congress passed the 19th Amendment, both women sided with the anti-suffrage movement to actively campaign against ratification and were present in Tennessee for the final battle.

Undoubtedly the threats real and imagined brought on by changing gender roles and the cultural and social upheavals of the times caused some southern women to reject suffrage. But let's not kid ourselves. It was the issue of race that was the driving force. It is a bitter pill to swallow especially since both sides were guilty of playing the 'race card.' Susan Anthony and Elizabeth Stanton opposed the 15th Amendment because it did not extend the right to vote to women. They argued that giving white women the vote would neutralize the African-American vote. Their stance caused a serious rift in the national suffrage movement and created two national suffrage organizations for a time. The two groups came back together under the skillful leadership of Carrie Catt but race continued to be divisive. By the 1900s suffragists had to admit they needed a southern strategy which meant not only did they avoid talking about equal rights but they would bow to white supremacy. Catt allowed the use of census data in hearings and publications as proof that giving women the vote would not threaten white dominance since there were more white women in southern states than black women. In an article appearing in the Birmingham News, Pattie Ruffner Jacobs wrote "Qualifications that have kept Negro men from voting in the southland can be adjusted to keep Negro women from voting when the ballot has made equal for white men and women." (Wheeler, p130) This was one of the most violent periods in the history of the South with Jim Crow laws and the Klan intent on suppressing the black vote. As we prepare for our centennial there are probably some who prefer to downplay this aspect of the women's suffrage movement but, even today, race and voting rights are intertwined. According to Weiss, the sad truth throughout the suffrage movement was that

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Southern Women and Suffrage—cont'd

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to win support in the South and even in some northern areas, suffragists had to capitulate and compromise. "When forced to choose between truly equal rights and woman rights, between insisting on justice for all, or accepting injustice to protect their own cause, the Suffs almost invariably chose the easier, less noble path." (Weiss, digital p224)

We can be very proud that today the League of Women Voters is in the forefront in protecting voting rights for all through [advocacy](#), education and legal action. If you have not done so, please contact your Congressional representative and urge his/her support of [HR 4](#), Voting Rights Advancement Act, introduced by Rep. Terri Sewell. It will correct the damage caused by Shelby v Holder and restore the preclearance formula provision to prevent discrimination in voting. LWVUS strongly supports HR4.

References:

Green, Elna C. [Southern Strategies: Southern Women and the Woman Suffrage Question](#). Chapel Hill: University North Carolina Press, 1997.

Weiss, Elaine. [The Woman's Hour, The Great Fight to Win the Vote](#). New York: Viking, an imprint of Penguin Random House LLC, 2018.

Wheeler, Marjorie Spruill. [New Women of the New South: The Leaders of the Woman Suffrage Movement in the Southern States](#). Oxford, UK, and New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Archival Collections

[Alabama Department of Archives & History](#)
[U.S. House of Representatives, History, Art & Archives](#)

The Women's Rights Movement, 1848 - 1920

Special Note: I relied on the sources above as I wrote this article. Due to space limitations for this article, I only cited direct quotes in the body but the sources above were invaluable. If you want to learn more about the women's suffrage movement, I highly recommend Elaine Weiss' book. Not only is it a comprehensive and compelling discussion of the U.S. women's suffrage movement, it is both highly entertaining and suspenseful and this is a history book! Even though you know the outcome, you will be sitting on the edge of your chair to the very end for the final vote in the Tennessee legislature and you will come away with a deeper appreciation for the many women who participated in the seventy-plus year fight to give women the vote.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

The LWVUS has been engaged in a program of self examination in order to improve our outreach and strengthen our paths to leadership. At Convention 2018, we voted to include a focus on improving our diversity, equity, and inclusion as a way to help accomplish these goals. Embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is core to the League's mission to empower voters and defend democracy.

During the late spring, a committee of four Alabama leaguers (Barbara Caddell, Sarah Carmack, Cora Cade Lemmon, and Joi Travis) met with our national Shur Fellow, Judy Golberg, to craft a plan for implementing DEI in Alabama. As part of this plan, which was adopted by the LWVAL Board, the LWVAL has adopted the following statement which we encourage local leagues to adopt and publicize:

LWVAL is an organization fully committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in principle and in practice. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to the organization's current and future success in engaging all individuals, households, communities, and policy makers in creating a more perfect democracy.

There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, gender identity, ethnicity, race, native or indigenous origin, age, generation, sexual orientation, culture, religion, belief system, political perspective or affiliation, marital status, parental status or family composition, socioeconomic status, language, accent, ability status, mental health, educational level or background, geography, nationality, work style, work experience, job role function, thinking style, personality type, physical appearance, and/or any other characteristic that can be identified as recognizing or illustrating diversity.

In addition to publicizing this DEI statement, local leagues are asked to explore some resources to help them on their DEI journey. Here is a list of suggested resources from LWVUS:

<https://www.lwv.org/league-management/leadership-development/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-continued-learning>. Future Voters and Facebook posts will have helpful advice as well.



The Advocacy Team needs you!

LWVAL is looking for members to serve on its Advocacy Team for the 2020 Legislative Session. It is a great way to learn more about the legislative process and to be informed during the session.

Contact Barbara Caddell at caddellh@comcast.net if you are interested in this great opportunity.



The Women's Suffrage Movement in the Tennessee Valley of Alabama: Huntsville, The Early Years

by Sarah Walker Carmack, Co-Director of Historical Education,
League of Women Voters of the Tennessee Valley



Figure 1: The Huntsville Political Equality Club, ca. 1895. Virginia Clopton-Clay is center-right in the group. (Photo from HMCPL)

By the early 1890s, the U.S. was not largely swayed to becoming supporters of the women's suffrage movement nor to women voting, especially not voting universally. National women's activism was in the public eye however. Full voting rights had been included in the constitution of the new state of Wyoming in 1890, and suffrage attention was on the other Western territories. Compromises had been reached and two national women's organizations had become one in 1890, and the new organization was named the National Women's Suffrage Association (NAWSA).

In 1893, the World's Columbian Exposition opened in Chicago. It was the *World's Fair* in common language and it included a Woman's Building, with a rare, new opportunity to promote women's interests. With good news on the rise for U.S. women working for the vote, Lucy E. Anthony was publicist on site at the Exposition and was even accepting NAWSA memberships for newborn baby girls. Lucy remained pragmatic, though, and so did her mother. Susan B. Anthony had edged her way into a spot at the Fair and was cautiously promoting the cause among the Women's Congress there, not concealing that there were only 7,000 members nationally and no abundant funds.¹ To continue real progress in the movement, national work, and particularly Southern work, must stay steady.

Madison County in the Nineteenth Century

Madison County, Alabama, through an early opening of federal lands to largely Anglo-heritage settlers, formed the earliest county in what is now North Alabama. Madison County was a military front, Union-occupied area, and significant transportation corridor during the Civil War. When the war ended, North Alabama railroads were decimated as a result of overuse and sabotage, but the support for rebuilding and re-establishing rail transportation created opportunity in the last half of the 1800s. The economy rose with businessmen, investors, and lawyers drawing industry into the area from all around the U.S. Cotton growing supported new cotton mills, and fruit-growing, plant nursery business, and the dairy industry began to rise as well.

Described later in upcoming parts of this suffrage story, a significant black middle class was established in Madison County in the 1880s and 1890s. The economy and growth of Huntsville, while still much

smaller than the large Alabama cities, offered new educational opportunity for women of means. More office work would create a professional class for women, and new social ideas imported by the variety of new residents would influence progressivism in this Southern town.

Priscilla Holmes Drake

James Perry Drake (1797-1876) and Priscilla Holmes Buell Drake (1812-92) spent years immersed in the politics of early Indiana, adopting an interest through several branches of their family. They had been influenced by radical social reformers and brought these ideas to discussions with the drafters of the 1850s Indiana constitution. They maintained a focus on the legal rights of women. The fall of James Perry's political favor and the deaths of two sons at early ages likely brought them to a new start in Madison County just after the Civil War, where they invested in land and farming. With the mixed heritage of many Midwest families and what seems a split between Union and Confederate support, the Indiana Drakes were complex. Seen through available documents and records, the Drakes and their daughters in Madison County maintained steady women's activism, took in children in need, and reached across the social color line. Family members left inheritance to and set aside land for their African American neighbors, with whom they likely shared association and friendship.²

Priscilla has been called Alabama's earliest suffragist. Historians note her participation in the 1873 National Women's Suffrage Association, attending conventions with noted Tennessean Elizabeth Avery Meriwether.³ From 1868 through 1914, official national and state yearly reports list and commend the Alabama contributions of Priscilla and her daughters Annie Buell Drake Robertson, Frank Buell Drake McCarty, and Buell Drake McClung. Annie, the last remaining of the Drake women in Huntsville, registered to vote in October 1920, age 80, and fulfilled the family's fifty-year voting-rights legacy.⁴

Historians state that, during her early presence at national meetings, Priscilla connected with Lucretia Coffin Mott (1793-1880), co-organizer of the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848, and maintained a correspondence.⁵ In her Alabama years, Drake also worked with the Women's Christian Temperance Union which believed that family circumstances were lowered by the easy availability of alcohol. The WCTU gained conservative and progressive support and furthered the social propriety of women working in public for a cause. However, prior to the 1890s, Drake had not found Alabama women receptive to joining in suffrage activism.

Suffrage Activism Rises in Alabama

As the Anthonys and their activist sisters hoped, suffrage organizing did take wing in



Figure 2: Ellen Hildreth with children and friends at Melton's Bluff on the Tennessee River. (Photo from ADAH)

Alabama in the difficult 1890s era. Huntsville women created a core of leaders in the movement, but they also had the help of their Morgan County neighbors. Ellen Stephens Hildreth (1845-1916) was a Decatur resident, president of the Alabama Equal Suffrage Association, and was friendly with the press, as her husband Christopher J. Hildreth was editor of *The Decatur Advertiser*. Christopher's diary offers a brief firsthand note of this early suffrage period. Christopher is also credited in the official *History of Woman Suffrage* as fostering the women's suffrage issue in the Tennessee Valley through establishing an editorial column in the *Advertiser* in 1890. Ellen created the first local Alabama Suffrage League in 1892 in Decatur, followed by Frances Griffin's Verbena League in South Alabama that same year. In 1893, Hildreth and Griffin would serve as officers of Alabama's first state association.⁶

Huntsville would be next to organize, with the Chapman family helping to usher in the North Alabama movement. Governor Reuben Chapman (1799-1884) had served as Alabama Governor from 1847 to 1849. He raised a large family and many locations in northeast Huntsville now commemorate the Chapman name. Among his children were Alberta Chapman Taylor and Ellelee Chapman Humes.⁷

Alberta (ca 1850-1912) married John G. Taylor, lived away from the South, and had been residing in Denver, Colorado, as the women's voting efforts were successfully growing across the West. *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, May 1897, records local praise of Alberta's strengths – her enthusiasm, her crisp, powerful editorials and her public speech-making. Her editorials were printed locally as she advocated for both her Western home and her birth state. A key Taylor speech was sent and given by Tennessee Suffragist Lide Meriwether at the Nashville Equal Suffrage League Convention.⁸

Ellelee Chapman was a society leader and would be called an influencer today. She married Milton Humes, new to Huntsville and studying law. As an investor, he would make a mark on the growing city as he invested in banks, cotton mills, and the marketing of a dairy industry on the rise with a Jersey cow named Lily Flagg.⁹ Ellelee spread the suffrage cause among her peers, especially those who were already working in organizations geared to progressive change.

A Turning-Point Event in the Valley

A significant collaboration between the Madison County suffrage organization, then known as the Huntsville Political Equality Club, and the Decatur/Albany suffragists was the scheduling of public lectures by Susan B. Anthony and Carrie Chapman Catt during their Southern tour that would preface the 1895 NAWSA convention in Atlanta. The tour would begin in Memphis and include stops in Decatur and Huntsville. The two visits by Anthony and Catt in North Alabama would allow skeptical residents to hear for themselves of the need for national women's suffrage from these leading women.

One more Chapman plays a part in the Huntsville suffrage story. Elizabeth Humes Chapman, daughter of Reuben Chapman, III, and niece of Ellelee and Alberta, researched and wrote *Changing Huntsville: 1890-1899* for her master's thesis at Columbia University. Elizabeth therein describes the effect of Anthony and Catt's visit to North Alabama. In her estimation, from this well-planned event, the League was actively launched in this district.¹⁰ At the Huntsville lecture on a January evening in 1895, Susan Anthony assured the audience of the practical operation of the woman suffrage movement, and Carrie Catt talked of the benefit of women accessing the ballot in choosing competent government leaders, lessening crime, and improving schools.

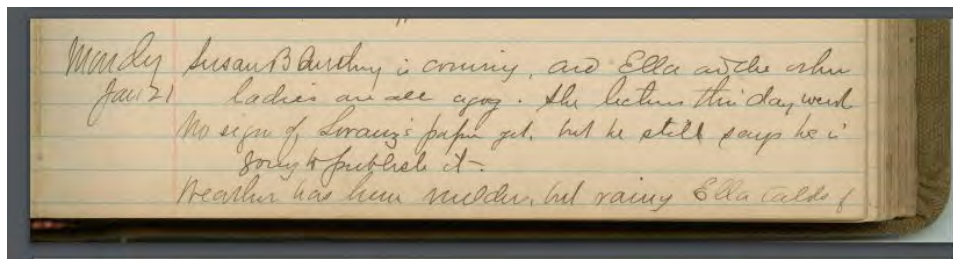


Figure 3: "the ladies are all agog," commented Christopher Hildreth on Anthony's visit to Decatur, Alabama. (Source ADAH)

Anthony and Catt were dinner and overnight guests at Abingdon Place, the elegant Humes home on the edge of town. The overall evening attended by prominent locals would raise Alabama support for the cause. Alberta Taylor was a delegate from her resident state of Colorado to the national convention in Atlanta, and, after this successful Huntsville event, she left by train with Anthony and Catt the following day for Atlanta. Alberta spoke at the Atlanta convention, and her time at the platform included interjections by Susan and Lucy Anthony, and Anna Shaw, to present an update on three women who were already serving in the Colorado state legislature and on Colorado women's organizations working on progressive reform. Colorado's advancements would continue to motivate Taylor's work for Alabama.¹¹

At the Anthony-Catt public address in Huntsville, the evening was introduced by Virginia Clay-Clopton of Huntsville (1825-1915). Clopton is more widely recorded in local history than even her prominent co-workers. Her first marriage to Clement Claiborne Clay, Jr., brought her first to Huntsville and then to Washington, D.C., when Clay was elected for multiple terms to the U.S. Senate. Virginia published memoirs of her elite social status in Washington of the 1850s. Avid support and service to the Confederacy during the Civil War led to conspiracy charges against her husband in Lincoln's assassination, his imprisonment, and loss of much of the family wealth by Clement's death in 1882. Virginia returned to Huntsville in 1892 after the death of her second husband, Alabama Supreme Court Justice David Clopton.¹²

Over the course of the two eras of the Alabama suffrage movement, Virginia was active as a local, state, and national NAWSA officer many times over. By 1896, Clopton, Humes, and Taylor would all be state officers of the Alabama Suffrage Association. In 1897, Clopton represented the Alabama Suffrage Association in Nashville at the Tennessee Centennial Exposition, the Mid-South's own grand fair. Alabama's Frances Griffin had also been present in Tennessee that year, speaking and organizing on a six-week tour.¹³ The Alabama ladies were assessing Tennessee's political prospects as more hopeful than theirs at home. The official Alabama report to NAWSA that year indicates the strain on the Alabama leagues at that time: the women were feeling strong opposition and focusing their work on distributing literature and keeping the issue visible in the local press.¹⁴

The Goal of State Constitutional Reform

Organizing work in Madison County would follow the path of Alabama suffrage organizations as a whole, by pressing the constitutional convention of 1901 to legalize the women's right to vote. Madison County's role in these events was ultimately to prepare a signed petition to request, at the very least, that Alabama women taxpayers or property owners be allowed to vote on property, tax, and education issues. This was a compromise request, and controversial at that, but Louisiana women had requested

and been granted the restrictive state right of voting only on tax referendums in their 1898 constitutional convention. Frances Griffin had traveled and spoken in New Orleans during that political process.¹⁵ She and other Alabama women now believed that, in the conservative Southern legislatures, only the smallest concession would now be possible.

In Alabama's 1901 convention, Frances Griffin was allowed to read an official address to the convention from the Alabama Suffrage Association. The Griffin address stated not only the previous failure of Alabama to allow the full citizenry of women, but it boldly called out the current intent of that convention to disenfranchise black men. Her words are difficult to read, even today. In spite of petitions and speeches to the assembly, only a measure was passed granting women voting on local bonds, which was then repealed the following day.¹⁶

The 1900 Alabama report to NAWSA was thoroughly detailed. It was a testament to the overall gains in law and society that Alabama women could build upon in future. It appeared to be reported as an encouragement for the Alabama suffrage workers. The list was significant: the age of protection for girls was raised from ten to fourteen, property and estate rights were secured for wives and widows, guardianship advances were made for mothers, child support considerations were secured for illegitimacy cases, female admissions were now accepted to all state higher education institutions, co-ed normal schools had been created, Alabama normal schools and colleges for African Americans were in operation, and progressive Federation of Women's Clubs were now operating in the state.

This period closes with the failure to make suffrage progress in Alabama. This would stall momentum and cause the suspension of all Alabama work. By 1902, Francis Griffin's reported to NAWSA that only the Decatur and Huntsville groups remained. They would disband soon afterward. Part Two of this article will cover the second phase of Madison County's women's suffrage organizing beginning in 1912, North Alabama's immediate reactions to the 19th Amendment ratification in 1920, an examination of voter registration, and the African American women who came forward to register in 1920.

¹ Jeanne Madeline Weimann, *The Fair Women: The Story of the Women's Building, World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago 1893*. (Chicago: Academy Chicago, 1981), 494-95.

² James Perry Drake's career centered upon federal and state public offices in Indianapolis and other towns in the state. James and Priscilla were both connected to James Henry Lane and some of their history can be followed in studies of Lane. Priscilla's Indiana women's rights work is noted on its own merit, and even associated with the radical issue of accepting women wearing pants.

³ Anne Firor Scott, *The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 171. Scott states that Priscilla Drake spoke at this early convention. The news article in *The Daily Inter-Ocean*, Aug. 10, 1878, p. 11 col. 2, reports that Priscilla was an officer of the national organization in both 1878 and 1879. Daughter Annie, wife of a former Confederate general, appears in the local news for her role in the Daughters of Confederacy. It is apparent that, during the suffrage era, several Huntsville women divided their time between causes that reflect a dualism: suffrage work; commemorating the Confederacy; supporting the U.S. troops in WWI; and fighting community hunger through United Charities. Although this is a topic of continued study, there is no evidence that local suffragists from the white communities in the 1890s supported a mindset for racially integrated organizational work.

⁴ The national reports and our local county records include errors in the Drake family names, but I have verified them against geographical evidence, birthdates, obituaries, U.S. Census, etc. See also *Registered Voters of Madison County*, vol. 1, Index Section 1902-1924. For the NAWSA reports of the involvement of the Drake family in Alabama women's suffrage movement, see *History of Woman Suffrage* by Anthony, Stanton, Gage, Blatch, and Harper. vol. 3 and vol. 4. pp. 7, 139, 162-63

⁵ I have not personally seen the documented source on this account yet.

⁶ Lee N. Allen, "The Woman Suffrage Movement in Alabama, 1910-1920 in Sarah Woolfolk Wiggins, ed., *From Civil Rights to Civil Rights: Alabama, 1860-1960*. p. 280 C.J. Hildreth's diary available from Alabama Department of Archives and History. [Web site] Ellen and C. J. Hildreth Collection. 7N/A/5/c Box 4 Folder 5. Accessed digitally 1 July 2019. For record of Alabama's beginning suffrage organizations, see *History of Woman Suffrage*. Vol 4 p. 465

⁷ Reuben Chapman also served as a U.S. Congressman and after his governorship was a member of the Alabama House of Representatives. He retired from his political roles after serving as a European diplomat for the Confederacy.

⁸ Huntsville women had the progressive support of *The Weekly Mercury* newspaper under the editor, Ben P. Hunt, but the paper was adversarial under the later editor R.E. O'Neal. Charles P. Lane, who operated several Huntsville newspapers over time, including *The Huntsville Independent* and *The Evening Tribune*, provided friendly vehicles for suffrage news. *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat* was managed by sisters Virginia and Susanna Clay and supported suffrage articles as well. A wealth of articles can be found by searching these at the Heritage Room of the Huntsville-Madison County Library and, with special permission, at the Madison County Records Center. Also refer to Elizabeth Humes Chapman. *Changing Huntsville: 1890-1899* (Huntsville: Historic Huntsville Foundation, 1989), 35-39.

⁹ Elizabeth Humes Chapman, 27. The team of investors marketed the local dairy business with a skill that makes Lily Flagg, the award-winning cream-producing local Jersey cow, a Huntsville household name more than one hundred years later. This business tactic reflects modern, innovative thought that that may often fall in the shadow of the history of the city's later technology growth. This business innovation parallels the boldness that went into the women's voting rights work.

¹⁰ Elizabeth Humes Chapman, 32. Elizabeth Chapman was also an influence in public education. Residing at Gladstone, the Chapman family farm and dairy, until her mother Rosalie Chapman's death in 1917, Elizabeth then moved to Birmingham to live with niece Rosalie Pettus Price. Her education career spanned fifty years, including those at Birmingham's Woodlawn High School.

¹¹ *The History of Woman's Marches: The Battle of Suffragettes*. Chapter 15. This is *History of Woman Suffrage* republished and renamed. I am looking further into this edition and the page number for this note is unavailable at this time.

¹² Earl P. Bell. "Virginia Caroline Tunstall Clay-Clopton of Nash County, NC and Alabama." *A NCGenWeb Project* [Web site] (2010). Accessed 25 June 2019

¹³ *History of Woman Suffrage*, vol. 4, 926

¹⁴ *History Woman of Suffrage*, vol. 4, 466. Visitors today will recognize the site of Tennessee's historic celebration as the city's Centennial Park.

¹⁵ *History of Woman Suffrage*. vol. 4, 681


¹⁶ Address of Frances Griffin available in *Proceedings of the 1901 Constitution*. Vol. 1. Day 16. Pp. 462-472.

http://www.legislature.state.al.us/aliswww/history/constitutions/1901/proceedings/1901_proceedings_vol1/day16.html. Accessed 6 March 2019. See also Scotty E. Kirkland, *We The People: Alabama's Defining Documents* (Montgomery: Alabama Department of Archives and History, 2019), 99.



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