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"THE BATTLE'S LOST AND WON":
RATIFICATION OF THE NINETEENTH AMENDMENT
IN TENNESSEE

By
Judith Beale

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“THE BATTLE’S LOST AND WON”:
RATIFICATION OF THE NINETEENTH AMENDMENT
IN TENNESSEE

by

JUDITH BEALE
B.A. University of Colorado, 1996

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
in the Department of History
in the College of Arts and Sciences
at the University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida

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ABSTRACT

Tennessee ratified the Nineteenth amendment by a margin of one vote. This circumstance has generated myths that serve to obscure rather than enlighten the events that occurred. Historians generally attribute women winning the right to vote to the improvements in their legal status, education, and employment that encouraged women to demand the right to vote. Following suffragists' rhetoric, historians believe that national opposition to women's enfranchisement came from the liquor industry and from railroad industries because they feared that women would vote to maintain prohibition and pass regulating legislation damaging to their industries. Suffragists, therefore, mounted many campaigns that led to women winning the right to vote in presidential elections in many states, thereby giving them influence over the presidency. Once Woodrow Wilson gave a federal amendment his support and helped it through congress, the matter was settled nationally, but the states still had to ratify it. Some southern states had to ratify the amendment for it to be added to the constitution. Yet, the South was noted for its opposition to women's enfranchisement based on its desire to maintain a segregated society and to retain the states' right to prevent black men from voting. Clearly, ratification was not inevitable.

This study, therefore, examines Tennessee, its politics, and its politicians to see to what extent the usual historical explanations that states' rights and the liquor and railroad

industries were the main obstructions to Tennessee's ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment. It concludes that women's increased access to education and employment affected too few women in the state to cause a great demand for the vote. Moreover, corporate opponents and racist fears were less important as impediments to ratification than historians have believed. Legislators voted neither out of fear of federal intervention, nor from party loyalty; they considered each issue on its merits. Whether it was good for the state, their constituents, and their own political careers seem likely reasons for their decisions. Woman suffrage hung in the balance until the last possible minute so that one vote eventually determined the outcome in Tennessee.

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INTRODUCTION

On 18 August 1920, Speaker of the House Seth Walker cried, "The hour has come. The battle has been fought and won!"¹ He was less confident after he lost the motion to table the amendment, but his loss was women's gain. When he also lost the final vote, women dressed in yellow waved their flags in celebration as Tennessee became the thirty-sixth state to ratify the Nineteenth Amendment, thereby enshrining it in the United States constitution. Although these women rejoiced at the prospect of voting for the first time in the 1920 elections, others dreaded the responsibility. Both camps fought their last battle in Tennessee, but their story had begun many years before. Generations of women had joined the fray in protracted and often discouraging campaigns to win the right to vote.

To understand what happened in Tennessee we need to know the course women, on both sides of the debate, traveled to arrive there. The state that played host to the final campaign to enfranchise American women also deserves consideration because the outcome could have been far different in another place and time. Tennessee women contributed greatly to the final assault, even though they were latecomers to the woman suffrage movement compared with their contemporaries in many other states. This

exciting story led to the creation of myths that unnecessarily embellish an already dramatic tale.

If Tennessee had not ratified, the amendment may never have succeeded. Only four other states had yet to consider it: North Carolina, Florida, Connecticut, and Vermont. North Carolina's House voted against the amendment on 19 August 1920, and the governors of both Connecticut and Vermont had refused to call special sessions, which indicated their opposition to the issue.² Despite these difficulties, suffragists campaigning in Tennessee succeeded in adding the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States' constitution. Historians have been less interested in analyzing the ratification campaign itself; instead, they have concentrated on the sources of opposition to woman suffrage.³

Generally, historians explain southern opposition to women's enfranchisement as arising from fears of increasing the black vote by enfranchising black women. According to historian Marjorie Spruill Wheeler, "southern white men would be reluctant to use against black women the violence that they regularly employed against black men."⁴ In national politics, southern congressmen were glad to have an opportunity to highlight racist concerns because they received good press at home. Politically, southern senators fared much better if they gave the appearance of having woman suffrage forced upon them because of fears that it would allow blacks to vote. Nevertheless, southern ideals could have supported woman suffrage. Although the ideal of the virtuous, domestic, southern lady militated against it, that ideal was offset by elite white men receiving support at the polls from their wives and daughters. Conversely, poor white men feared

that the more educated elite white women would outnumber them at the polls.

Fundamentalist Protestantism deplored women's public participation, but their support for prohibition and other moral causes, which suffragists also supported, offset that difficulty. One unifying idea dominated the others, however. The South did not want federal intervention, and a woman suffrage amendment would inevitably lead to such intervention. Although states' rights concerns were not limited to southerners, fears of blacks voting and concerns for states' rights prevented southern congressmen from supporting a federal amendment.⁵

Elite whites had gained political control of the South at the end of the nineteenth century. Wealthy, black-belt Democrats had successfully limited the franchise to gain control of black counties, end political competition, and keep the lower classes out of politics because they wanted to control their black tenants, ensure that they did not have to deal with black elected officials, and avoid arguments with upland and urban areas over increased taxation to meet their needs. They found it easier to accomplish their aims if they undermined Republican support. Black belt areas were over represented because population was used to determine representation at party conventions so ruling whites had increased power to choose nominees. The most important outcome of the Progressive Era in the South was, therefore, black disfranchisement. Racism was not limited to Democrats; Republicans were also racist. Although both parties were prepared to court black votes when necessary, they sought to prevent blacks from voting so that they had no need to do so. Southern Progressives wanted government by the people, but they defined "the people" as white middle class males. They did not, therefore, disfranchise

only blacks but also poor whites by enforcing such measures as poll taxes and literary tests.⁶

In the 1880s, when Bourbon Democrats had gained power in Tennessee, they found Republican rule a convenient threat by which they could distract voters from internal party dissension that could have cost them their power.⁷ Thus, they induced Democratic voters to see Republicans as dangerous to society. Middle and west Tennessee allied in voting Democrat to keep eastern Republicans out of statewide offices. New women voters threatened to disrupt this power structure because nobody knew how they would vote. If women voted like their menfolk, they would simply double the electorate without giving either party an advantage. If, however, they voted independently from men, they would threaten the status quo possibly leading to loss of Democratic control. Changing the electorate was, therefore, naturally unattractive to entrenched political parties.⁸

White supremacy touched everything in the South forcing everyone into stereotypical roles. Segregation had the dual purpose of keeping black men away from white women and consigning blacks to permanent inferiority so that poor whites felt compensated for their low economic status. The former aim ensured that segregation was not enforced in all male arenas.⁹ Although suffragists condemned the race issue as “bogus,” the passage of the federal amendment allowed antisuffragists to “divert the debate from woman suffrage . . . to . . . states’ rights fears.”¹⁰ Historians, therefore, agree that ratification was unlikely in the South because of states’ rights concerns arising from the need to protect white supremacy. Some, such as Aileen S. Kraditor, also acknowledge

that many legislators “opposed woman suffrage on any terms.”¹¹ No one has yet examined the effect of the race question specifically on Tennessee’s ratification campaign.

According to suffragists, further opposition to enfranchising women came from brewers, manufacturers, and railroad owners. Historians agree that such groups opposed woman suffrage because they believed that women would support prohibition and child labor and worker protection legislation that would be detrimental to their industries. However, historians disagree on the influence corporate interests had on woman suffrage campaigns. For instance, David Morgan believes that suffragists sought progressive support, which made them enemies among the liquor interests and in industry. Brewers, therefore, worked to defeat woman suffrage, but they ceased to wield much power after many states passed prohibition laws and the nation adopted the prohibition amendment. Steven Buechler argues that brewers’ and manufacturers’ power varied in different regions. He found that the brewers were stronger in the West and manufacturers posed a greater threat in the East. Thomas Jablonsky does not accept the idea that liquor interests controlled antisuffragists, while Jane Jerome Camhi sees them as inextricably linked. A political scientist, Eileen Lorenzi McDonagh, used non-traditional statistical methods to analyze congressional representatives’ voting patterns during the Progressive Era, and she found that representatives who voted for woman suffrage usually opposed the Eighteenth Amendment.¹² Her conclusion suggests that suffragists and brewers garnered support from the same constituency of civil rights’ defenders. Unfortunately, her investigations do not always include southern states, but her research indicates that the old stereotypes

linking woman suffrage and prohibition may be too simplistic. Such diverse conclusions drawn by scholars suggest that corporate influence on suffrage campaigns probably depended on time and place.

In Tennessee, despite the passage of the Eighteenth Amendment, suffrage leader Carrie Chapman Catt accused the liquor interests of working to defeat the woman suffrage amendment. Similarly, suffragist Sue White blamed the Louisville and Nashville Railroad for increased opposition to the amendment. Historian Elna C. Green supports White's view because she argues that the railroad more than the liquor industry influenced the antisuffrage campaign.¹³ Marjorie Spruill Wheeler, however, contends that "a formidable anti lobby, aided by lobbyists for liquor, railroad, and manufacturing interests, tried to break down suffrage support in the House."¹⁴ Yet, Anastatia Sims points out that suffragists "were skilled publicists for their own cause" and had become experts at "portraying themselves as defenseless women fighting ruthless political machines and heartless corporate giants."¹⁵ Further investigation is required to ascertain the likelihood that the liquor industry or the railroad still exerted sufficient influence on Tennessee's legislators to make them change their vote by 1920.

McDonagh has shown that congressmen voted according to their constituents' views. Further, she found that urban constituents generally did not support woman suffrage so their representatives usually voted against the measure. In contrast, historian Sara Hunter Graham found that Texas ratified the Nineteenth Amendment without any evidence of mass support for it. Similarly, she argues that Oklahoma ratified the amendment because it succumbed to outside political pressure.¹⁶ Since Tennessee's

suffragists had never directly campaigned among the voters, no direct comparison can be made between legislators' votes and their constituents' opinions. Suffragists had, however, conducted several campaigns among legislators and finally persuaded them to pass a law granting women presidential and municipal suffrage in 1919. Investigating whether the state's legislators voted consistently on woman suffrage measures should indicate whether they primarily considered their constituents or their national political parties in making their decisions. No such investigation has yet been undertaken in Tennessee.

Either way, suffragists nationally always had to appeal to a larger, primarily male, constituency to achieve their aim. The major suffrage organization, the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA), tried to convince congress that a demand existed for women's enfranchisement by increasing its membership. NAWSA members spoke publicly to educate the voters and create a demand for suffrage. Historian Suzanne Marilley argues that suffragists only made progress when "powerful men perceived coincidences between woman suffrage and their interests."¹⁷ Suffragists, therefore, tried to join the electorate and gain presidential suffrage so that the presidency came under their direct influence. Although presidential suffrage gave suffragists leverage with the national political parties who wanted to control the White House, southern Democrats would not support their national party if it meant losing the South.¹⁸ Presidential suffrage alone would not, therefore, exert enough influence on Tennessee legislators to ensure ratification. In Tennessee, therefore, suffragists had to convince male politicians, and to do so, strived also to win over the male electorate.

Stories about the ratification campaign have been told and retold until they have taken on a life independent of historical events. Legislators' sudden changes of opinion prompted many of these tales. For instance, Representative Harry Burn apparently changed his vote at the last minute at his mother's behest, and Speaker Seth Walker allegedly removed his support from the suffragists because he received a bribe from the railroad. These often repeated stories need scrutinizing. Specifically, historians have to disentangle myth from reality in Tennessee's ratification campaign to produce a coherent analysis of the events.

Historians have attributed women's enfranchisement to a "national tide" created by suffragists who "exposed" sexism and fought against it.¹⁹ Morgan argues that women gained "mass recognition" for their war effort following their advances in legal status, education, and employment, but Ellen Carol DuBois found that the war delayed women's enfranchisement in some countries.²⁰ Green agrees with Morgan that southern women's interest in suffrage resulted from increased participation in education, employment, and reform activism.²¹ Nobody has yet examined whether these reasons are relevant to Tennessee's ratification campaign.

The outcome of Tennessee's ratification campaign was not assured. As a border state it may not have such strong prejudices as the deep South, but that factor alone would not dispose it to ratify because Delaware had failed to do so. Tennessee had already granted women the right to vote in presidential and municipal elections by 1920, but both Connecticut and Vermont had some form of limited suffrage for women, yet they delayed ratification until after Tennessee had made woman suffrage the law of the land. Having

presidential and municipal suffrage had made women partisan so Democrats, Republicans, and suffragists all had factions, leaving the legislators equally divided. Further, Tennessee's constitution required that an election should intervene between congressional approval of an amendment and state ratification which exacerbated states' rights concerns.²²

Tennessee has historical importance as the state that gave women the right to vote and, inherently, as a dynamic state with complicated interactions in its political framework arising from geographical variations.²³ Its ratification campaign, then, needs investigating in the light of the state's social and economic situation and women's position within that society. Further, an examination of the liquor and railroad industries should show to what extent they influenced the ratification campaign. Finally, an examination of voting patterns in the Assembly should show whether politicians voted unexpectedly on the woman suffrage issue. It is in the hope of illuminating these topics and destroying some of the myths that this study begins. Nonetheless, no investigation of the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment can proceed without first explaining the origins of the woman suffrage movement.

ENDNOTES

1. Mary Gray Peck, *Carrie Chapman Catt: A Biography* (New York: H. W. Wilson Company, 1944), 335-6.
2. *Nashville Banner*, 9 August 1920, 6; Ida Husted Harper, ed., *History of Woman Suffrage*, vol. VI, (New York: J. J. Little, 1922; reprint, New York: Source Book Press, 1970), 500 (page citations are to the reprint edition).
3. Suffragists always referred to "woman suffrage" because they saw womanhood as providing a single experience that united all women. Since the women's liberation movement, women have realized that other influences, such as ethnicity, race, and class, inform their lives. This paper will follow historical convention and use the term "woman suffrage" to discuss the campaigns to enfranchise women.
4. Marjorie Spruill Wheeler, *New Women of the New South: the Leaders of the Woman Suffrage Movement in the Southern States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 17-8.
5. David Morgan, *Suffragists and Democrats: The Politics of Woman Suffrage in America* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1972), 75-6, 98, 142; Eleanor Flexner, *Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States* (Cambridge MA: Belknap Press, 1959), 304; Dewey W. Grantham, *The Life and Death of the Solid South: A Political History* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1988), 60.
6. J. Morgan Kousser, *The Shaping of Southern Politics: Suffrage Restriction and the Establishment of the One-Party South, 1880-1910* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 238, 6-8, 118; Grantham, *Life and Death of the Solid South*, 204; John D. Hicks, *The Populist Revolt: A History of the Farmers' Alliance and the People's Party* (n.p.: University of Minnesota, 1931; reprint, n.p.: University of Nebraska Press, 1961), 52 (page citations are to the reprint edition); Jack Temple Kirby, *Darkness at the Dawning: Race and Reform in the Progressive South* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1972), 4; Joseph H. Cartwright, *The Triumph of Jim Crow: Tennessee Race Relations in the 1880s* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1976), 68, 97; Dewey W. Grantham, *Southern Progressivism: The Reconciliation of Progress and Tradition* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1983), xvii.

7. Bourbon Democrats were those who returned to power following the end of Reconstruction in 1877. They were called “Bourbons” because many before and since saw them as members of the Old South elite who regained power just as the Bourbon family had returned to power in France following Napoleon’s defeat in 1815. They believed strongly in states’ rights, and initially at least drew their support from ex-confederates. As planters, they favored a low tariff in contrast to the New South industrialists who wanted a high tariff. C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South 1877-1913* (n.p.: Louisiana State University Press, 1951), 14; Cartwright, *Triumph of Jim Crow*, 42; Elna C. Green, *Southern Strategies: Southern Women and the Woman Suffrage Question* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 33; William R. Majors, *Change and Continuity: Tennessee Politics since the Civil War* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1986), 19; Stanley J. Folmsbee, Robert E. Corlew, and Enoch L. Mitchell, *Tennessee: A Short History* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1969), 393.

8. Majors, *Change and Continuity*, 20; John R. Vile and Mark Byrnes, “Tennessee’s Postbellum Political History: Voting Patterns and Party Identification,” in *Tennessee Government and Politics: Democracy in the Volunteer State*, ed. John R. Vile and Mark Byrnes (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1998), 2; Mattie Duncan Beard, *The WCTU in the Volunteer State* (Kingsport, TN: Kingsport Press Inc., 1962), 132; Kirby, *Darkness at the Dawning*, 43; Rebecca Edwards, *Angels in the Machinery: Gender in American Party Politics from the Civil War to the Progressive Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 57, 131, 133, 135; Morgan, *Suffragists and Democrats*, 180.

9. Joel Williamson, *A Rage for Order: Black-white Relations in the American South Since Emancipation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 198; Woodward, *Origins*, 211; Edwards, *Angels in the Machinery*, 157.

10. Suzanne D. Lebsack, “Woman Suffrage, White Supremacy: A Virginia Case Study,” in *Women’s America: Refocusing the Past*, ed. Linda K. Kerber and Jane Sherron De Hart (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 324.

11. Morgan, *Suffragists and Democrats*, 184; Margaret Ripley Wolfe, *Daughters of Canaan: A Saga of Southern Women* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1995), 206; Wheeler, *New Women*, 4; Aileen S. Kraditor, *The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement, 1890-1920* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), 197.

12. Carrie Chapman Catt and Nettie Rogers Shuler, *Woman Suffrage and Politics: The Inner Story of the Suffrage Movement* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1923; reprint,

with an introduction by T. A. Larson, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1969), 102 (page citations are to the reprint edition); Eileen Lorenzi McDonagh, "The Significance of the Nineteenth Amendment: A New Look at Civil Rights, Social Welfare, and Woman Suffrage Alignments in the Progressive Era," *Women and Politics* 10 (1990): 79; Morgan, *Suffragists and Democrats*, 162-4, 184; James H. Timberlake, *Prohibition and the Progressive Movement, 1900-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), 123; Anne Firor Scott and Andrew MacKay Scott, *One Half the People: The Fight for Woman Suffrage* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975), 25; Steven M. Buechler, *Women's Movements in the United States: Woman Suffrage, Equal Rights, and Beyond* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990), 182; Thomas J. Jablonsky, *The Home, Heaven, and Mother Party: Female Antisuffragists in the United States, 1868-1920*, Scholarship in Women's History: Rediscovered and New, ed. Gerda Lerner, Vol. 6 (Brooklyn: Carlson Publishing Inc., 1994), 74; Jane Jerome Camhi, *Women Against Women: American Anti-Suffragism, 1880-1920*, Scholarship in Women's History: Rediscovered and New, ed. Gerda Lerner, Vol. 4 (Brooklyn: Carlson Publishing Inc., 1994), 104.

13. "Ratification in Tennessee", n.d., Records of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Sue White, [Nashville] to Abby Scott Baker, Columbus, 16 August 1920, National Woman's Party Papers: The Suffrage Years, 1913-1920, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Green, *Southern Strategies*, 49.

14. Wheeler, *New Women*, 35.

15. Anastatia Sims, "'Powers that Pray' and 'Powers that Prey': Tennessee and the Fight for Woman Suffrage," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* L (winter 1991): 212, 214.

16. Eileen Lorenzi McDonagh, "Electoral Bases of Policy Innovation in the Progressive Era: The Impact of Grass-Root Opinion on Roll-Call Voting in the House of Representatives, Sixty-third Congress, 1913-1915," *Journal of Policy History* 4 (1992): 180; Eileen L. McDonagh and H. Douglas Price, "Woman Suffrage in the Progressive Era: Patterns of Opposition and Support in Referenda Voting, 1910-1918," *American Political Science Review* 79 (1985): 431; Sara Hunter Graham, *Woman Suffrage and the New Democracy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 136, 139.

17. Suzanne M. Marilley, *Woman Suffrage and the Origins of Liberal Feminism in the United States, 1820-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 10.

18.Wheeler, *New Women*, 36-7.

19.Paul E. Fuller, *Laura Clay and the Woman's Rights Movement* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1975), 168.

20.Morgan, *Suffragists and Democrats*, 44, 53, 65, 184; Ellen Carol DuBois, "Woman Suffrage and the Left," in *Woman Suffrage and Women's Rights* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 272.

21.Green, *Southern Strategies*, 14.

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CHAPTER 1--THE AMERICAN SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT

As a young newlywed, Elizabeth Cady Stanton accompanied her husband to the 1840 London Antislavery Conference. Disturbed by women's exclusion from the sessions and encouraged by abolitionist Lucretia Mott, Stanton thereafter devoted any spare time she had, after raising seven children, to improving women's status in society. At the famous Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention in 1848, Stanton tried to persuade other women that natural justice dictated that they should have equal rights with men educationally, legally, occupationally, and most radical of all, politically. After she met temperance activist Susan B. Anthony in 1851, Stanton also worked for temperance reform, but woman's rights remained her passion. Nevertheless, before the Civil War, the two women did not form any national woman's rights organization. Their greatest achievement lay in contributing toward New York State's passage of the 1860 Married Woman's Property Act. Although legislators subsequently deprived women of some benefits of this Act, it initially built on the 1848 legislation that allowed married women to own property and permitted married women to keep the wages that they earned, to sue in the courts, and to have equal guardianship rights over their children.¹

During the Civil War, Stanton and Anthony formed the National Woman's Loyal League to promote patriotism among northern women and to foster an interest in

emancipation as a war issue. With other abolitionists, they petitioned congress to pass a constitutional amendment abolishing slavery. After the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment, abolitionists differed over whether ex-slaves needed enfranchisement. Stanton supported Wendell Philips's argument that ex-slaves must gain full citizenship, but she linked freedom for slaves with freedom for women and called for woman's enfranchisement as well. Abolitionists had, however, united with the Republican Party to ensure that black men could participate in politics and supported the Fourteenth Amendment, which added the word "male" to the constitution for the first time. The Fifteenth Amendment, which prevented citizens from being denied the right to vote "on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude" but allowed discrimination on the basis of sex, confirmed Stanton and Anthony's split from their erstwhile abolitionist allies.²

Partly owing to these opposing views on the importance of woman's rights vis-à-vis those of black males, suffragists formed two separate organizations in 1869. The American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA), initially presided over by Henry Ward Beecher, devoted itself to obtaining the franchise for women through campaigns to amend state constitutions. Stanton led the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) in campaigning for a federal amendment. The contrast in leadership showed that the groups differed both in tactics and in their attitudes toward men. While the AWSA welcomed male support, the NWSA insisted that women should control their own campaign because they could never trust men to give priority to women's demands. For the next twenty-one years, both associations held conventions, organized lecture tours

and petition drives, distributed propaganda, published journals, joined in civil disobedience by refusing to pay taxes, and tried to vote, all to publicize their belief that women should have the right to vote. The NWSA succeeded in bringing a federal amendment before Senate and House committees; the AWSA obtained eight state referenda. Neither organization managed to gain the vote for any woman at federal or state level, although women could vote in some territories, such as Wyoming and Utah.³

Some women wanted to vote but did not join either national organization. These women wanted to use the franchise to reform society. For instance, women belonging to the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) wanted to vote on temperance issues. Thus, WCTU leader Frances Willard advocated enfranchising women so that they could vote for prohibition to protect the home from drunken husbands and fathers not because she sought equality or justice for women. On the surface, at least, she eschewed Stanton's argument that justice dictated that women were entitled to vote because they had natural rights as human beings. Home protection formed the basis for requests that women should vote in school board or municipal elections. Kentucky had granted widows with school age children the right to vote in school board elections as early as 1838. Kansas expanded this idea and granted women municipal suffrage in 1887.⁴

Although by 1890 several states had enacted laws that granted women school board suffrage, the lack of progress encouraged the two woman suffrage organizations to unite. In 1890, the NWSA and the AWSA amalgamated to form the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA). This organization also attracted the women who wanted to vote for home protection issues. Although the NAWSA had fused

disparate suffrage voices, it worked primarily for state amendments rather than a federal amendment though it retained a very small presence in Washington, D.C.⁵ By the end of the century, it had achieved some success; Wyoming, Colorado, Utah and Idaho had fully enfranchised women, and half the states had given women the right to vote in school board elections.⁶ It had also suffered some reverses, such as the United States Supreme Court's 1893 decision that Michigan's legislature had exceeded its authority by granting women municipal suffrage. The new century began badly, with no further states enfranchising women until NAWSA campaigns succeeded in Washington and California in 1910 and 1911 respectively. Six referenda campaigns resulted in women gaining the franchise in three states in 1912: Arizona, Kansas, and Oregon.⁷ Clearly, enfranchising women on a state-by-state basis would be a slow process.

Although southern women were late joining the woman suffrage movement, they were not idle. In 1906, Belle Kearney of Mississippi founded the Southern Woman Suffrage Conference (SWSC). Her few supporters believed that southern men would give women the vote if they asked for it. This organization advocated limiting the franchise by education not by sex. Since white women were more likely to be literate than were blacks, white females could outvote blacks. Their idea was not a new one; Henry Blackwell had originally advanced this suggestion in 1867. Despite the efforts of the SWSC, southern men resisted enfranchising women and found alternative ways of disfranchising blacks and poor whites, such as implementing poll taxes, grandfather clauses and white primaries.⁸

Since the NAWSA concentrated on state campaigns, it had made no progress in securing a federal amendment. Although the Senate committee had several times secured a favorable majority, the Senate itself had voted on a constitutional amendment only in 1887. In 1912, the NAWSA invited two young suffragists, Alice Paul and Lucy Burns, to take over its congressional committee. Their persistent tactics, such as holding parades and mass meetings, sending delegations to the President, and lobbying congressmen succeeded in revitalizing the federal amendment as an issue; however, their independent ideas upset the NAWSA and led to a breach in the organization that would never be healed. Paul and Burns founded a separate group that, in 1916, became the National Woman's Party (NWP). Nevertheless, they influenced the NAWSA's attitude toward a federal amendment, for the parent organization now vigorously pursued both state-by-state passage of woman suffrage and a change in the federal constitution.⁹

In 1915, the indefatigable Carrie Chapman Catt resumed the presidency of the NAWSA.¹⁰ By then, women in Montana and Nevada had won the right to vote by state amendment, and Illinois women had the presidential and municipal franchise granted them by law. A massive campaign to win enfranchisement in New York in 1915 failed, which meant that only western states had enfranchised women. To make woman suffrage a truly national issue, Catt wanted to win New York or another eastern state, and one southern state. Believing that unsuccessful campaigns could only damage the cause, Catt wanted NAWSA members to campaign for state amendments only where they were likely to succeed. In other states, she wanted members to campaign only for presidential suffrage. She planned to agitate for a federal amendment once women had become a

critical mass of the electorate and had sufficient influence to force congress to pass it.

Afterwards, Catt knew that the NAWSA would have to organize in every state to ensure that three-fourths of them ratified. Nevertheless, her plan centralized power nationally by removing autonomy from the state organizations. They now had to submit their campaign proposals to a national council for approval. Those who received permission also received funding from the national organization and practical assistance from national organizers. Thus, the NAWSA would mount similar campaigns everywhere. For the first time, state organizations could not deny the national leadership access to their state. Although the 1916 NAWSA convention in Atlantic City approved her strategy, Catt upset some southern suffragists because her plan deprived them of independence and prevented most of them from campaigning for state amendments.¹¹

Some southern suffragists objected to any federal action. Kate Gordon, who had led Louisiana's state suffrage organization since the 1890s and had been the NAWSA's corresponding secretary from 1900-1909, founded the Southern States Woman Suffrage Conference (SSWSC) to oppose a federal amendment. Instead, it campaigned for state amendments. Gordon won a temporary victory at the 1916 Democratic Convention where she, Catt, Paul, and Josephine Dodge, president of the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage (NAOWS), all spoke on behalf of their organizations. Dodge encouraged the delegates to oppose woman suffrage altogether. Catt contented herself with a request for enfranchisement without specifically mentioning the means. Paul demanded the immediate enfranchisement of women by federal amendment. Gordon requested that the convention adopt a plank that limited action only to state amendments.

The Democrats endorsed Gordon's preference, but her victory was short lived. Although southern suffragists wanted to win the right to vote in their home states, they were not all committed to the states' rights theory. Thus, Gordon won surprisingly little support for her organization among southern suffragists because they were no longer prepared to limit their chances of gaining the franchise.¹²

Despite these challenges to their unity, NAWSA members rallied to support Catt's plan, and in 1917 their persistence paid off when New York women won a state amendment enfranchising women. South Dakota, Michigan, and Oklahoma joined the roll the following year. Catt's tactic of winning presidential suffrage where possible also paid off, and by 1919, twelve states had joined Illinois in granting presidential suffrage to women. Suffragists now had their eastern state and considerable influence over the presidency. Although they had not yet persuaded a southern state to enfranchise women fully, southern women had won the right to vote in primaries in both Texas and Arkansas.

In 1918, suffragists' efforts also finally succeeded in Washington, D.C. where a federal amendment granting all women equal voting rights had passed the House. When the Senate concurred the following year, the campaign moved back to the states where thirty-six states had to ratify the amendment to make it the law of the land. If women were to vote in the 1920 elections, suffragists would have to persuade a minimum of twenty-five governors to call special sessions because only eleven legislatures were due to meet before the 1920 election. In fact, only six states ratified the Nineteenth Amendment without resorting to special sessions. Each ratification campaign contains a

story of its own, but by the end of 1919, twenty-two states had passed the amendment. Victory seemed possible, but by no means a forgone conclusion.¹³

Serious obstacles still loomed; for example, twenty-two states had laws that allowed for a referendum on a federal amendment after the legislature's ratification. Liquor interests had used that provision to challenge the Eighteenth Amendment or to force state referenda on the issue after it was ratified in January 1919. Such legal difficulties began to impinge on the drive to ratify the woman suffrage amendment. Some governors saw little reason to call special sessions if legal challenges would delay the amendment so that women would not be able to vote in the 1920 election. Tennessee's constitution required an election before the legislature could ratify a federal amendment. Since its General Assembly could not act until 1921, Tennessee women did not respond to NAWSA pleas to extend their organization in preparation for a ratification campaign.¹⁴

By the end of March 1920, suffragists had won thirty-five of the thirty-six states they needed to ratify. Nationally, circumstances favored them because both national political parties wanted the amendment ratified. The Republicans wanted to gain the new women voters' support by enfranchising them, and the Democrats wanted to avoid blame for defeating it. Both the NAWSA and the NWP, therefore, enlisted the aid of national party leaders in securing the final state. NAWSA members lobbied the chairmen of both the Democratic and Republican National Committees to persuade them to force one more state to call a special session. Republican women visited Senator Warren G. Harding, the Republican presidential nominee, but Harding was not prepared to influence the governors. Members of the NWP also visited Harding in his Washington, D.C. office, but

he held firm and maintained that he would not force a governor to act against his conscience. Paul responded that enfranchised women had no reason to vote for him in the presidential election if he had no power to implement his party's platform, which included woman suffrage.¹⁵

Despite these efforts, suffragists still needed one more state when, in June 1920, the United States Supreme Court ruled on two Ohio cases that nothing could interfere with a state legislature's right to ratify a federal amendment.¹⁶ Tennessee's requirement that an election should intervene before a legislature could act no longer seemed an impediment to action, and it became a prospect as the thirty-sixth state. This limitation in its constitution would, however, continue to plague suffragists throughout the ratification campaign.

Tennessee women had not attempted to organize a woman suffrage association until 1889 when a small group of women gathered in Memphis to establish a league. They elected Lide Meriwether, the state WCTU president, as first president. Anthony and Catt had visited Memphis, when undertaking a speaking tour of the South in 1895, and addressed both white and black audiences. Despite these early efforts, woman suffrage societies did not become firmly established until 1912. By 1919, Tennessee had seventy-eight suffrage societies. Although some of these associations started with only ten members, many became very large organizations with more than one thousand members. Suffragists tried to influence more women to join their societies by providing entertainments, entering parades, and giving public speeches. In 1914, Anne Dallas Dudley, president of Nashville's Equal Suffrage League, organized Nashville's first

woman suffrage parade when a band led a procession of about fifty cars around Centennial Park. Woman suffrage societies trained their members for campaigns by teaching suffrage schools and organizing classes in public speaking. English suffragettes, Sylvia and Emmeline Pankhurst, both spoke to audiences in Nashville, Sylvia in 1912 and Emmeline in 1913 and 1916.¹⁷

On the state level, a split in Tennessee's suffrage organization in 1914 made it less effective though both sections remained affiliated to the NAWSA, which held its convention in Nashville that year. Eventually, they settled their differences, and Catherine Kenney, a prominent club woman, became president of the Tennessee Woman Suffrage Association (TESA). State associations published and distributed pro-suffrage propaganda, organized petitions, and lobbied the General Assembly. In 1915, women gained a majority in the Assembly for a state constitutional amendment. Such amendments were, however, difficult to achieve in Tennessee because they had to gain a two-thirds majority in the next legislature and then win a referendum. Following Catt's plan, therefore, suffragists focused on campaigning for presidential and municipal suffrage. They organized by wards to influence legislators effectively. Their campaign failed in 1917, though the women of Lookout Mountain, near Chattanooga, won municipal suffrage. A second campaign gave Tennessee women presidential and municipal suffrage in 1919 about six weeks before the federal government passed the woman suffrage amendment.¹⁸

White women undertook most suffrage campaigning in Tennessee, but black women also supported women's enfranchisement. Little is known about the activities of

black suffragists, however. Segregation limited black women's opportunities to influence events, which has in turn hidden their activities from historians. Some women do, however, creep out of the shadows. Dr. Mattie Coleman worked as "state negro organizer" in association with Kenny, and J. Frankie Pierce spoke at the meeting to form the Tennessee League of Women Voters, a NAWSA affiliate, in May 1920.¹⁹ In other states, middle-class black women encouraged women's interest in civic affairs. Black women in Tennessee seem to have done the same because when they gained presidential suffrage, middle-class, black women held meetings to teach women how to vote.²⁰

The NWP also had a presence in Tennessee. Sue Shelton White had belonged to the TESA until Catt criticized her for helping NWP speakers find venues in Tennessee during World War I. White was working at NWP headquarters in Washington, D.C. when it became clear that suffragists would need to fight a ratification campaign in Tennessee. She returned to her home state to lead the NWP campaign.²¹

Once the Ohio decision made possible ratification in Tennessee, the Tennessee League of Women Voters lobbied the state press, the governor, and the legislature to convince them that the state could legally ratify the amendment without waiting until after the election. When this tactic did not succeed, the NAWSA leadership asked President Woodrow Wilson for help. After he obtained an opinion from the United States' Department of Justice, Wilson asked Governor Albert H. Roberts to call a special session. When Tennessee's State Attorney General Frank M. Thompson confirmed that opinion, Roberts decided that he would call a special session after the primaries. White congratulated Roberts on his decision although she would have preferred the special

session to take place before the primaries on 5 August so that women could vote in them.²²

In July, both the NWP and the NAWSA sent deputations to Ohio Governor James Cox, a Democratic candidate for President, to enlist his aid in pressuring Governor Roberts to support ratification. Cox declared his dedication to obtaining woman suffrage. Although he claimed that he already had men in Tennessee canvassing legislators on the issue, Cox asked the NWP to appoint a committee to collaborate with him. When he accepted the Democratic nomination, Cox declared that women had made a great contribution to the wartime defense effort and they deserved the opportunity to do the same in peacetime. Since Roberts had supported Cox's nomination, the latter promised to campaign for Roberts's reelection. To suffragists, therefore, Cox's encouragement seemed vital to preserving Roberts's commitment to ratifying the amendment. Even so, the NWP distrusted Roberts' commitment and feared that he misinformed Cox so that the latter would refrain from pestering him.²³

Despite their earlier failures, both the NWP and the NAWSA also tried to enlist Harding's support. Catt, a Republican herself, elicited a promise from him that if any Republican asked his advice about how to vote he would encourage them to ratify the amendment. On 22 July 1920, the NWP organized a delegation of 150 suffragists, including White and Elizabeth Crozier French, a former president of the TESA, to ask him to influence the Republicans in Tennessee to support the amendment. Although suffrage organizations enlisted support from both national parties, they had no preference

regarding which party enfranchised them. Above all, they wanted to win the right to vote.²⁴

Since the national political climate favored ratification, suffragists saw Tennessee as a good opportunity to win the thirty-sixth state. Both national party committees and both presidential candidates publicly favored woman suffrage. The Republican national leadership especially favored ratification in Tennessee because Republican votes would probably be needed to secure the amendment since Democrats would be unlikely to do it alone. Republicans were under pressure to prove their commitment to the issue because Vermont's Republican governor had failed to call a special session. After receiving a delegation of Republican women representing the NAWSA, the Republican National Committee asked Tennessee's Republican legislators to approve ratification.²⁵ In Tennessee, the state chairmen and the state conventions of both parties had endorsed the amendment; the governor and gubernatorial candidates publicly supported it, and the legislature had already passed presidential suffrage.

Republicans could, however, delay ratification until they could gain credit by passing it in a Republican state, such as Connecticut. Tennessee's Republican legislators could vote against ratification to prevent the Democrats from claiming that they had enfranchised women. Suffragists, therefore, needed bipartisan support to ensure that Tennessee ratified. Although historians have asserted that suffragists could expect to win in Tennessee since the legislators who had granted women presidential and municipal suffrage the previous year would vote on ratification, the legislature would have new

members. Women, therefore, not only had to lobby existing legislators but also the candidates for the thirteen vacancies that had to be filled before the session convened.²⁶

Even without these differences in the composition of the Assembly, suffragists could not automatically expect support from the same legislators who had supported presidential suffrage because they now had to contend with legislators' concerns that ratifying the amendment would weaken the state constitution and threaten states' rights. Presidential suffrage had succeeded by only fifty-four votes to thirty-two in the House and seventeen votes to fourteen in the Senate; therefore, suffragists had no margin to lose votes for reasons unconnected with woman suffrage. Moreover, suffragists had little time to convince the new legislators because the special election was held with the legislative primaries on 5 August and the special session convened on 9 August. Finally, the women who had registered to vote in the presidential election could not vote in the legislative primary because they could vote only in primaries for presidential and municipal offices. Suffragists, therefore, had to make it clear that they were campaigning only for ratifying the amendment and not for influencing the primary. Nevertheless, suffragists may have benefitted from the election. Jacob H. Simpson, a Democrat, who ran on a suffrage platform, beat two Republicans in Bradley and Polk Counties. Of the thirteen new legislators, eleven of them supported ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment.²⁷

As a Tennessee woman, White knew that she would have to organize the campaign herself because "only [a] most tactful worker with [a] southern viewpoint" could make a difference to the outcome.²⁸ Her view was confirmed when an antisuffragist threatened a Republican representative that if he voted to ratify, he would guarantee a

Republican majority in Tennessee. Relying on NWP headquarters to raise the twenty thousand dollars it anticipated spending on five organizers and a press chairman, White installed herself in a store two blocks from the Capitol. White believed that she would need fifteen organizers to ensure that she had enough women to survey the entire state. Although only eight national organizers worked in Tennessee, she had help from local NWP activists, such as, Mrs. Hugh L. White and Mrs. R. B. Cooke. Inadequate road and rail services meant NWP organizers could not easily reach many parts of the state. Nevertheless, three organizers worked across the state. Betty Gram covered both middle and west Tennessee. Catherine Flanagan and Anita Pollitzer worked in east Tennessee. Mabel Reber and Edith Davis organized publicity. The other national organizers involved were Florence Bayard Hilles, Mary Winsor, and Anne Calvert Neely. Although White had wanted more organizers, she declined further help on 5 August because of her fears that women who knew little about Tennessee would hinder rather than help the cause. Even with knowledgeable help, she could not guarantee success. State conditions had, therefore, begun to take precedence over national issues.²⁹

Catt and Marjorie Shuler led the NAWSA contingent, ably assisted by local women such as Abby Crawford Milton, president of the Tennessee League of Women Voters. Her husband, George Fort Milton, published the *Chattanooga News*, which supported woman suffrage. When Catt first arrived in Tennessee on 23 July, she undertook a speaking tour of the state. Intending only to stay for a short while, she personally organized her first ratification campaign. She did not, however, lobby legislators herself since she claimed that she was only there to advise suffragists and that

Tennesseans should decide whether to ratify the amendment. Similarly, Abby Crawford Milton organized two women from each congressional district to obtain their legislator's pledge because a legislator was responsible only to his constituents.³⁰

At Catt's urging Catherine Kenney established a Men's Ratification Committee that included men who controlled every political faction. Unfortunately, this very diversity meant that the men did not work well together, and some men listed as committee members actually opposed ratification of the amendment. In practice, the Men's Ratification Committee consisted of ex-governor Tom Rye. Thus, Catt's brainchild achieved little.³¹

Despite commitment from the national parties, the presidential candidates were inconsistent in their support; Harding especially remained ambivalent. He kept his promise to Catt by soliciting a favorable vote from Senator John C. Houk when the latter asked his advice. On 4 August 1920, however, Harding refused to influence legislators; the following day he again telegraphed asking them to support the amendment. On 18 August his message to Tennessee's House declared that no representative who believed that ratification was illegal under the state constitution should vote against his conscience. The NWP also had concerns about James Cox's dedication to woman suffrage because it believed that liquor interests supported his candidacy. Nevertheless, he contacted the Speaker of Tennessee's House, Seth Walker, daily and encouraged him to vote for the amendment.³² These uncertainties meant that suffragists had no guarantees that their allies would remain true long enough to allow Tennessee to ratify the amendment. Moreover, suffragists had to contend with strong opposition. Antisuffrage women began

campaigning very quickly and employed supportive newspapers to arouse public fears about woman suffrage.³³ Such women presented a formidable challenge to suffragists' finally achieving their goal.

ENDNOTES

1. Alma Lutz, *Created Equal: A Biography of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 1815-1902* (New York: J. Day Co., 1940; reprint, New York: Octagon Books, 1974), 25, 96, 44, 55, 73, 78, 110 (page citations are to the reprint edition); Flexner, *Century of Struggle*, 73, 88, 349; Linda K. Kerber and Jane De Hart-Mathews, ed., *Women's America: Refocusing the Past*, 2d ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 474-5.
2. Flexner, *Century of Struggle*, 143-4; Lutz, *Elizabeth Cady Stanton*, 124-7, 131-3; Ellen Carol DuBois, *Feminism and Suffrage: The Emergence of an Independent Women's Movement in America 1848-1869* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978), 58-9, 172; U. S. Constitution, amend. 15, sec. 1.
3. DuBois, *Feminism and Suffrage*, 187, 189, 195. Ann D. Gordon, "Woman Suffrage (Not Universal Suffrage) by Federal Amendment," in *Votes for Women! The Woman Suffrage Movement in Tennessee, the South, and the Nation*, ed. Marjorie Spruill Wheeler, (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1995), 13; Lutz, *Elizabeth Cady Stanton*, 184 176, 191, 193, 219, 231, 239-40; Catt and Shuler, *Woman Suffrage and Politics*, 495, 109; Utah had woman suffrage rescinded by Act of Congress in 1887 as part of its proscription of polygamy. Utah's women regained the right to vote in 1896 when Utah became a state; Flexner, *Century of Struggle*, 163.
4. Ruth Bordin, *Woman and Temperance: The Quest for Power and Liberty, 1873-1900* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981), 162; Gordon, "Woman Suffrage," 13-4; Ruth Bordin, *Frances Willard: A Biography* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 10; Kraditor, *Ideas*, 4.
5. Gordon, "Woman Suffrage," 14-15; Kraditor, *Ideas*, 4.
6. Wyoming, 1890; Colorado, 1893; Utah, 1896; Idaho, 1896.
7. Catt and Shuler, *Woman Suffrage and Politics*, 84, 119, 128, 123, 12, 120, 174, 176, 190; Lutz, *Elizabeth Cady Stanton*, 294.
8. Wheeler, *New Women*, 119, 121; A. Elizabeth Taylor, *The Woman Suffrage Movement In Tennessee* (New York: Octagon Books, 1978), 25; Marjorie Spruill Wheeler, "The Woman Suffrage Movement in the Inhospitable South," in *Votes for Women! The Woman*

Suffrage Movement in Tennessee, the South, and the Nation, ed. Marjorie Spruill Wheeler (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1995), 39; Kousser, *Southern Politics*, 43.

9. Caroline Katzenstein, *Lifting the Curtain: The State and National Woman Suffrage Campaigns In Pennsylvania As I Saw Them* (Philadelphia: Dorrance & Company, 1955), 173, 183, 356-7; Inez Haynes Irwin, *The Story of the Woman's Party* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1921), 33, 35, 45, 172; Catt and Shuler, *Woman Suffrage and Politics*, 250, 192-3.

10. Catt had previously held the presidency between 1900 and 1904, but she had resigned to care for her mother and her husband. Peck, *Carrie Chapman Catt*, 132.

11. Catt and Shuler, *Woman Suffrage and Politics*, 250, 192-3, 280, 304; Flexner, *Century of Struggle*, 281; Marilley, *Origins of Liberal Feminism*, 213-4; Wheeler, "Inhospitable South," 43-4; Ida Husted Harper, ed. *History of Woman Suffrage*, Vol. V (New York: J. J. Little, 1922; reprint, New York: Source Book Press, 1970), 510-1 (page citations are to the reprint edition); Wheeler, *New Women*, 119.

12. Peck, *Carrie Chapman Catt*, 249; Camhi, *Women Against Women*, 128; Wheeler, "Inhospitable South", 41, 43; Harper, *History of Woman Suffrage V*, 712; Wheeler, *New Women*, 134.

13. Catt and Shuler, *Woman Suffrage and Politics*, 304, 315, 243; Katzenstein, *Lifting the Curtain*, 357-9.

14. Catt and Shuler, *Woman Suffrage and Politics*, 366-8, 370; Taylor, *Woman Suffrage in Tennessee*, 104; Graham, *Woman Suffrage*, 130.

15. Catt and Shuler, *Woman Suffrage and Politics*, 398, 402-3; *Suffragist*, July 1920, 127-8.

16. Catt and Shuler, *Woman Suffrage and Politics*, 420.

17. Various clippings from the scrapbooks n.d. Bettie Mizzel Donelson Papers, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville; Catt and Shuler, *Woman Suffrage and Politics*, 417; Peck, *Carrie Chapman Catt*, 82-3; Taylor, *Woman Suffrage in Tennessee*, 15, 36, 38-41, 17, 52-4; Paul E. Isaac, *Prohibition and Politics: Turbulent Decades in Tennessee, 1865-1920* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1965), 14.

18. Anne Sloan, "Women in Tennessee Politics," in *Tennessee Government and Politics: Democracy in the Volunteer State*, ed. John R. Vile and Mark Byrnes (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1998), 107; *Nashville Banner*, 7 Jan 1919, 4; Taylor, *Woman Suffrage in Tennessee*, 99.

19. Anita Shafer Goodstein, "A Rare Alliance: African American and White Women in the Tennessee Elections of 1919 and 1920," *Journal of Southern History* 64 (May 1998): 227.

20. Carole Stanford Bucy, "'The Thrill of History Making': Suffrage Memories of Abby Crawford Milton," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* LV (fall 1996): 232; Adele Logan Alexander, "Adella Hunt Logan, the Tuskegee Woman's Club, and African Americans in the Suffrage Movement," in *Votes for Women! The Woman Suffrage Movement in Tennessee, the South, and the Nation*, ed. Marjorie Spruill Wheeler (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1995), 81, 86; Taylor, *Woman Suffrage in Tennessee*, 61-2, 67, 70-72, 93-5, 98, 102-3; Harper, *History of Woman Suffrage* Vol. V, 398; Lester C. Lamon, *Black Tennesseans, 1900-1930* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1977), 241.

21. Betty Sparks Huehls, "Sue Shelton White: The Making of a Radical," *West Tennessee Historical Society Papers* 48 (1994): 33; Sue White [Washington, D.C.], to Senator Stockard, 30 June 1920, NWP Papers; National Press Chairman, [Washington, D.C.], to "the manager," 30 June 1920, NWP Papers.

22. Catt and Shuler, *Woman Suffrage and Politics*, 419, 424-8; *Suffragist*, July 1920, 121; Memorandum, Sue White, to Alice Paul, n.d., NWP Papers; Sue Shelton White, "Mother's Daughter," in *These Modern Women: Autobiographical Essays from the Twenties*, ed. Elaine Showalter (New York: The Feminist Press, 1978), 51; Sue White, Washington, D.C., to Senator Stockard, 30 June 1920, NWP Papers.

23. Emma Wold, to Mabel Raef Putnam, 15 July 1920, NWP Papers; *Nashville Banner*, 23 July 1920, 7; *Knoxville Sentinel*, 9 July 1920, 6; *Suffragist*, August 1920, 157; *Chattanooga Times*, 8 August 1920, 6; *Knoxville Sentinel*, 5 July 1920, 3; *Knoxville Sentinel*, 20 July 1920, 1; Alice Paul, Washington, D.C., to Abby Scott Baker, Columbus, 11 August 1920, NWP Papers.

24. Unnamed, to Governor Roberts, Nashville, 8 July 1920, NWP Papers; Mrs. J. M. McCormack, [Nashville], to Sue White, Dayton, OH, 13 July 1920, NWP Papers; *Suffragist*, August 1920, 161; *Chattanooga Times*, 11 August 1920, 4; Catt and Shuler,

Woman Suffrage and Politics, 403; Alice Paul, to Florence Brewer Boeckel, 17 July 1920, NWP Papers; Alice Paul, to Florence Brewer Boeckel, 20 July 1920, NWP Papers; Sue White, to the Hon. A. G. Mathews, Memphis, 12 July 1920, NWP Papers.

25. Sue White, to Banks P. Turner, Dyer, Tennessee, 1 July 1920, NWP Papers; Catt and Shuler, *Woman Suffrage and Politics*, 437-8.

26. Headquarters Secretary, [Washington, D.C.], to Mrs. Henry Justice, Devon, Pennsylvania, 29 June 1920, NWP Papers; *Suffragist*, August 1920, 155, 157-8; Unnamed, to Dr. R. Q. Liddiard, Lebanon, Tennessee, 12 July 1920, NWP Papers; Sims, "Powers that Pray," 209.

27. Catt and Shuler, *Woman Suffrage and Politics*, 429; Sue White, to Alice Paul, 29 June 1920, NWP Papers; Taylor, *Woman Suffrage in Tennessee*, 100, 102; Sue White, Nashville, to Alice Paul, [Washington, D.C.], 24 July 1920, NWP Papers; Unnamed, Nashville, to Mrs. Rector, 30 July 1920, NWP Papers; Wheeler, *New Women*, 36-7; *Nashville Banner*, 5 August 1920, 1; *Chattanooga Times*, 7 August 1920, 2; *Chattanooga Times*, 9 August 1920, 1.

28. Sue White, Nashville, to Alice Paul, D.C., 1 August 1920, NWP Papers.

29. *Chattanooga Times*, August 12 1920, 1; Headquarters Secretary, [Washington, D.C.], to Mrs. Mercy A. Symmes, Arcata, CA, 29 June 1920, NWP Papers; Headquarters Secretary, [Washington, D.C.], to Anne Calvert Neely, Atlanta, 29 June 1920, NWP Papers; Sue White, to Alice Paul, 24 July 1920, NWP Papers; *Suffragist*, August 1920, 164; Sue White, Nashville, to Betty Gram, Memphis, and Anita Pollitzer, Knoxville, 4 August 1920, NWP Papers; Alice Paul, [Washington, D.C.], to Mrs. H. O. Havermeyer, 6 August 1920, NWP Papers; *Knoxville Sentinel*, 5 August 1920, 6; *Nashville Banner*, 8 August 1920, 7; Irwin, *Woman's Party*, 453; Sue White, [Nashville], to Alice Paul, [Washington, D.C.], 5 August 1920, NWP Papers; Sue White, to Alice Paul, 29 June 1920, NWP Papers.

30. Bucy, "Thrill of History Making," 225, 231-2; *Nashville Banner*, 27 July 1920, 4; *Knoxville Journal and Tribune*, 24 July 1920, 1; *Nashville Banner*, 8 August 1920, 1; *Knoxville Journal and Tribune*, 3 August 1920, 10; *Chattanooga Times*, 11 August 1920, 1; *Knoxville Journal and Tribune*, 13 August 1920, 2; Catt and Shuler *Woman Suffrage and Politics*, 431.

31. Carrie Catt to Catherine Kenney, 19 June 1920, Carrie Chapman Catt Papers, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville; *Memphis News Scimitar*, 10 August 1920, 1; Sims, "Powers that Pray," 210-1.

32. Sue White, to Alice Paul, 29 June 1920, NWP Papers; *Chattanooga Times*, 6 August 1920, 3; *Suffragist*, August 1920, 157-8; *Knoxville Sentinel*, 6 August 1920, 14; Catt and Shuler, *Woman Suffrage and Politics*, 439, 443-4; Bucy, "The Thrill of History Making," 236; Emma Wold, to Mary Winsor, 17 July 1920, NWP Papers; Cox may have feared that antisuffragists would vote for Harding in protest against a Democratic state adding the Nineteenth Amendment to the constitution. After Tennessee ratified, Cox wrote to the Tennessee Bar Association declaring that Tennessee's constitutional demand that an election intervene before ratification of a federal amendment was so good that it should be added to all state constitutions. Suffragists may have been right to doubt his commitment to their cause though whether he received support from the liquor industry is unknown. *Knoxville Sentinel*, 20 August 1920, 3.

33. Sue White, to Alice Paul, [Washington, D.C.], 3 July 1920, NWP Papers.

CHAPTER 2--THE AMERICAN ANTISUFFRAGE MOVEMENT

Not all American women fought for the right to vote; a sizeable and vocal contingent organized groups dedicated to opposing female enfranchisement. The power to grant women the right to vote rested with men, many of whom refused to extend the franchise to women. Suffragists found it difficult enough to convince these men that women wanted to vote, but when antisuffrage women resisted strongly, the suffragists' task became even harder. In Tennessee, antisuffragists fought strenuously to prevent ratification of the federal amendment.

In the early years of suffrage agitation, the movement was so small that it presented no threat. As suffrage demands gained momentum, however, antisuffrage women collected signatures on petitions to show legislators that suffragists did not represent all women. Antisuffragists first formed themselves into an organization after they successfully campaigned against women receiving municipal suffrage in Massachusetts in 1882. That year, thirteen women representing Boston's social elite founded the Boston Committee. They did not campaign publicly, but they supplied articles to the newspapers and successfully convinced the press that suffragists represented only a small minority of women.¹

In 1895, Massachusetts held a referendum on municipal suffrage for women in which women who met the qualification to vote in school elections could participate. To counter this new threat, the Boston Committee reorganized itself into a more formal structure, the Massachusetts Association Opposed to the Further Extension of Suffrage to Women (MAOFESW). It campaigned successfully for women not to vote in the referendum; only 23,000 of the 600,000 eligible women voted. Although the vast majority of voting women wanted municipal suffrage, the small turnout allowed the antisuffragists to argue that the silent majority who did not vote represented a more significant figure and showed women's lack of interest in voting.²

MAOFESW members used three main strategies. First, they lobbied legislators with antisuffrage propaganda and arranged for speakers to explain their views to legislative committees. Second, they sent articles to the press and distributed leaflets to raise public awareness of the dangers they saw in women's enfranchisement. Third, they tried to increase their membership. Women could easily join the MAOFESW; they had only to pledge agreement with the organization's aims. Since the MAOFESW guaranteed the secrecy of its membership lists, the strength of its support remains unclear. Nonetheless, it had committees scattered across the country, though many mobilized only in response to suffrage campaigns.³

Initially, antisuffragists confined their activities largely to writing and distributing literature. They commissioned others to obtain signatures on petitions, and they employed men to present their case to legislatures. In 1895, however, Mrs. Francis Scott replaced her husband as the public voice of the New York state association when she spoke to the

Senate Judiciary Committee. Although antisuffrage women disliked such public appearances, they began hiring women as activists. For instance, in 1899 they sent a female representative to Oregon to campaign against the passage of a state suffrage amendment. Antisuffrage women did not, however, speak outdoors; their male counterparts undertook that work. Nor did they adopt the suffragists' idea of holding parades. Despite their feminine sensibilities, however, they distributed antisuffrage propaganda at suffrage parades, and they tore down suffrage posters. In New York, antisuffragists adopted more aggressive tactics than those used in the rest of the country, even dumping garbage on suffragists' heads as they marched past the antisuffragists' headquarters.⁴

For antisuffragists, their most important arenas were state legislatures where they successfully prevented referenda. Even when states held referenda, antisuffragists forced their opponents to fight several campaigns to gain a favorable majority. For instance, Oregon held referenda in 1900, 1906, 1908, and 1910 before enfranchising women in 1912. Antisuffragists continued to base their arguments on the 1895 Massachusetts referendum and used it to claim that most women had no interest in voting. Although their activities responded only to the suffragists' initiatives, antisuffragists were very successful in preventing states from granting women the right to vote. They did not, however, need to act more assertively because they had to convince legislatures only to maintain the status quo while suffragists pressed for a sweeping change.⁵

Consequently, antisuffrage organizations attracted more support in areas where suffragists were active, notably the urban centers of the Northeast. Since most

antisuffrage leaders were wealthy women, they financed their campaigns themselves and frequently held their meetings privately in members' homes. The private nature of their organization prevented them from expanding their membership. Although many antisuffragists belonged to women's clubs and gained support from individual members, they were slow to capitalize on that relationship and allowed suffragists to dominate the club movement.⁶

When suffragists won the 1911 referendum in California, antisuffragists again revised their organizational methods. Members of several antisuffrage clubs met to form a national organization under the leadership of Josephine Dodge.⁷ The National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage (NAOWS) operated in much the same way as the NAWSA in providing propaganda to its membership, unifying the work already in progress, and expanding and extending state organizations. It began publishing a paper called the *Woman's Protest* from 1912, which became the *Woman Patriot* after 1917. The NAOWS was not, however, the only antisuffrage organization. Many other associations, such as the Massachusetts Public Interest League or the National League for the Civic Education of Women operated under names that hid their true aims, but they also disseminated antisuffrage information.⁸

Although suffragists proudly proclaimed their advances in the West, the next five years saw the antisuffragists win famous victories in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York. Antisuffragists succeeded so well in their aims that no state east of the Mississippi had given women full equal voting rights with men before 1917. When Josephine Dodge resigned from the NAOWS in the summer of 1917, the organization

moved its headquarters to Washington, D.C. Her successor, Alice Wadsworth, presided over the organization's greatest defeat to date when, in November, the suffragists won New York. Antisuffragists in New York then abandoned their cause to take political appointments, and despite their aversion to voting, they voted to elect antisuffrage men to congress. The NAOWS never found a way of allowing its members to continue supporting its cause after their states enfranchised them. Consequently, antisuffrage women and their state organizations left the NAOWS when they became eligible to vote, which gradually eroded its support. Nevertheless, the antisuffragists never needed to become a mass movement because they worked only to prevent change.⁹

After the antisuffrage defeat in New York, the suffrage debate became centered in Washington, D.C. Antisuffragists had obstructed congressional action that would give women the right to vote since they had petitioned congress against a federal amendment in 1869. Subsequently, they had testified before legislative committees. Once the NWP began agitating for a federal amendment in 1913, antisuffragists devoted more resources to ensuring that legislators received antisuffrage literature to counteract the NWP's propaganda. The MAOFESW sent a successful delegation to congress in 1913 to stall suffragists' attempts to secure the establishment of a House committee devoted to investigating the question of woman suffrage. Like suffragists, antisuffragists also organized themselves by political districts to influence legislators more effectively. After 1917, antisuffragists increased their efforts and established committees to lobby congressmen.¹⁰ Ultimately, however, they failed to prevent congress from passing a federal amendment and sending it back to the states for ratification.

Wadsworth saw little point in opposing ratification; she believed that the fight had ended when Congress passed the amendment. Mary Kilbreth of New York, however, responded to the challenge. She took over the leadership and moved the NAOWS headquarters back to New York. Hoping to secure the amendment's defeat, she traveled the states to prevent governors from calling special sessions and organized separate campaigns to oppose ratification in each state.¹¹ To prevent the addition of the amendment to the constitution, she had only to persuade thirteen states to vote against the amendment.

The NAOWS leaders, understanding that the southern states represented a likely source of support for their cause, established a regional organization based in Alabama. Calling itself the Southern Women's League for the Rejection of the Susan B. Anthony Amendment (SWRL), it successfully campaigned in the South. Nina Pinckard of Alabama became president aided by several vice-presidents one of whom, Mrs. George Washington, came from Tennessee. The state also had a representative, Mrs. Morgan Brown, on the organization's board of directors. Kate Gordon and other southern suffragists, who wanted the state governments to enfranchise women, rallied in support of the SWRL. Charlotte Rowe, a New York attorney, who had joined the NAOWS leadership in 1917 directed much of the SWRL's campaign.¹² In Texas, she lost a campaign in which politicians and newspapers opposed her and suffragists had, according to the antisuffrage press, "vast financial resources" with which to campaign.¹³ The SWRL's most important contribution to the antirratification campaign, however, was to print and distribute literature for use by state antisuffrage organizations.¹⁴

Throughout the battle for woman suffrage, suffragists had chosen the states in which they would campaign; antisuffragists simply had to counterattack. Only once had antisuffragists tried to incite action. In Wisconsin in 1917, they advocated a referendum for the women of the state to decide whether they wanted the franchise. Such action was unusual; antisuffragists typically influenced the debate by defining the parameters in which suffragists could work. Suffragists could not simply present their reasons why they believed that women should have the vote; they had to defend their ideas against the opposition's attacks. When antisuffragists voiced objections, suffragists had to divert their energies from their campaign to respond to their opponents' attacks. For instance, antisuffrage claims that women did not want the vote forced the NAWSA to increase its membership to prove that those claims were false.¹⁵

Antisuffrage propaganda focused on gender and class concerns rather than on the justice of women's disfranchisement. Their arguments fell into three main categories. First, they claimed that woman suffrage would upset society's gender balance; second, they contended that women's votes would give power to the lower classes especially blacks and immigrants, and third they felt that women's influence within their own sphere gave them sufficient power. This political rhetoric, however, obscured the sincere reasons why antisuffragists did not want women to vote.

First, antisuffrage political rhetoric depicted suffragists as unmarried and childless, which opened the way to accusing suffragists of lacking femininity and threatening men's masculinity. Antisuffragists also perverted Darwin's argument that biological specialization indicated a higher life form, to assert that separate areas of

responsibility for men and women showed that humans had a highly developed civilization. Thus, destruction of the separate spheres for men and women would decrease specialization and make the human race less civilized. Moreover, if women voted, they would have less time to care for their husbands and families. Husbands would, therefore, have to fend for themselves and care for their children. Further, wives who voted differently from their husbands would cause conflict at home. Finally, once women gained the right to vote, hitherto a male prerogative, they would assume other male duties, which would lead inevitably to a sex war. Thus, enfranchisement would erode the differences between women and men, destroy traditional gender roles, disrupt the peace and stability of homes, and threaten not only the social order but the advance of civilization itself.¹⁶

Second, antisuffragists argued that women's votes would upset the status quo by giving power to the lower classes. Before 1920, elections took place in saloons, rather than in churches as they do now. Respectable women did not enter saloons; therefore, antisuffragists argued, middle-class, educated women would not go to the polls. Working-class, uneducated, immigrant, and black women would have no such apprehensions and would, therefore, outvote the upper-class, educated, white, native-born women. Ultimately, giving women the right to vote would increase the number of votes cast by the lower classes compared with those cast by the upper classes. Roman Catholic women presented an additional problem because they would vote as their church required which would give the Vatican control of the United States.¹⁷ Altogether, woman suffrage would result in social anarchy.

Finally, antisuffragists argued that women did not need the franchise because they had sufficient power already. Women's primary responsibility within their sphere lay in their roles as mothers; they had a duty to teach their children good citizenship. If mothers performed their duties well, they would develop sons with high moral standards. These men would be well equipped to govern the country, and women would have substantial influence on their decisions. Antisuffragists argued that if men were not governing well, responsibility for their failure lay with their mothers who had not equipped them with strong principles. According to this argument, if women could not even raise their menfolk correctly, they would not vote more morally than did men. In any event, mixing in the dirty business of politics would taint women and reduce their moral influence within society.¹⁸

Antisuffrage arguments changed after 1917 when Wadsworth took over as president of the NAOWS. In light of antisuffrage fears that their political activism would undermine their argument, she asked men to resume speaking publicly for the organization instead of allowing women to do so. Simultaneously, many moderate antisuffragists drifted away from the cause allowing reactionary rhetoric to dominate. When men assumed the public speaking role, the rhetoric changed to follow their opinions. Antisuffrage men tended to argue that women were incompetent rather than following the political arguments that antisuffrage women used. Male antisuffragists now extended accusations against suffrage leaders beyond childlessness to include allegations that they were immoral and supported interracial marriage. These men also argued that voting would damage women's mental health, weaken unborn children, and possibly

prevent motherhood. Even more outrageous, in view of the extensive antisuffrage organization, were the allegations that because women typically worked alone in bearing children, they had not developed the talents necessary to organize together and work with others.¹⁹

During World War I, the new rhetoric condemned suffragists for pacifism that antisuffragists considered un-American. The NWP's activities, such as picketing the White House and mocking Woodrow Wilson's speeches, gave antisuffragists plenty of ammunition to support their arguments. Thus, they attacked suffragists for bolshevism, socialism, and feminism, grouping the ideas together to incite opposition to women's enfranchisement.²⁰

Southern antisuffragists also used different arguments from their northern counterparts. Many southern antisuffragists and states' rights suffragists held extreme views on race, which led them to employ strong racist rhetoric to argue their case. Both groups often labeled black voters as ignorant and corrupt. Such women saw disfranchising black men as a progressive reform that had helped to purify politics. They argued that if black women gained the right to vote, black men would soon regain the right also. They feared that permitting black men to have such power would result in social mixing between the races that could lead to black men raping white women. States' rights suffragists' solution to this problem differed from antisuffragists who did not want to risk extending the franchise at all. States' rights suffragists believed that enfranchising women would ensure white supremacy because the United States supreme court would

not invalidate woman suffrage, whereas, it could declare unconstitutional grandfather clauses and literacy tests. Thus, white women's votes would offset those of blacks.²¹

All this political propaganda, however, needs distinguishing from the sincerely held reasons why antisuffragists opposed their own enfranchisement. Generally, antisuffragists opposed woman suffrage for five reasons. First, their own self-interest dictated that they should do so. Some of these elite women did not want women to vote because they held political appointments in welfare work. They feared that if women gained the franchise, such jobs would go to those best qualified, namely, college-educated women. Second, antisuffragists worried about women losing status. They feared that as more women chose to work outside the home being a housewife would become a less desirable and less appreciated occupation. If women had economic independence, their work would acquire a monetary value, but many antisuffragists did not work for pay so their unpaid labor would receive less appreciation.²²

Third, antisuffragists had an ordered view of society, which they feared would collapse if women won the right to vote. They perceived three classes of people in society: the "best people" who were too busy with philanthropy to have time to vote, the "indifferent" who had no interest in larger questions, and the "degenerate" who would vote against enlightened legislation.²³ Antisuffragists did not view men and women as separate classes; therefore, men could adequately represent women's opinions and make laws to protect women. Further, antisuffragists believed that voting was a heavy responsibility from which women were fortunate to be free. The best women were fully occupied in caring for their families and did not have time to shoulder the added burden

of politics; therefore, they would not vote. Woman suffrage would, therefore, allow the “indifferent” and “degenerate” to outvote the better classes, which antisuffragists saw as undesirable because such people did not have the time, skills, or education, to participate effectively in public life.²⁴ In Tennessee, for instance, antisuffragists called their opponents “mountain women” signifying that they viewed them as ignorant and among the degraded classes that they so despised.²⁵

Fourth, antisuffragists held firm views of the family’s structure and women’s participation in it. They saw the family as a unit represented in public by the father and influenced in private by the mother. Their appreciation of domesticity should not, however, be interpreted as a desire to restrict all women to the home. Antisuffragists wanted women to receive an education so that they would acquire the skills needed to form their children’s characters. Still, they emphasized that mothers did not need to vote because they influenced legislation by directing the votes of husbands and sons. In this way, mothers controlled public opinion so that women would gain the right to vote when the majority of them called for it. Until then, the general lack of public interest in the subject proved that women did not want to vote.²⁶

Finally, antisuffragists believed that government was based on force. Since a majority of women could not physically impose their views on a minority of men, they should not vote. To antisuffragists, politics encompassed the specific issues of war, foreign policy, amending the constitution, and international trade and tariffs. Women, however, worked for social reform, directed education, cared for the mentally and physically ill, and provided for the poor. Antisuffragists, therefore, tried to fix boundaries

around the word “politics” and confine men’s activities within those boundaries. Nevertheless, antisuffragists saw themselves as having influence with all politicians because they were outside party politics. To them, losing their nonpartisan status would reduce their political power.²⁷

Southern antisuffragists largely agreed with these views, but they had some ideas that were peculiarly southern. To them, the southern lady epitomized southern civilization, which was superior to that of the North. This ideal gave women a high status in society, which would be at risk if their relationship to that society altered. Southern antisuffragists usually believed in states’ rights. Although they disliked any northern ideas that sought to change southern life, woman suffrage’s roots in the abolition movement made it especially unpalatable. For southern antisuffragists, blacks dominated the “degenerate” classes. They feared that black women would win the vote with their white sisters. Such a step would lead, in turn, to enfranchising black men and losing white supremacy. Most southern antisuffragists craved more than white control of government; they went beyond racism or white supremacism to wanting a “white monopoly” of government.²⁸

As in other states, Tennessee women only organized against suffrage once suffragists began agitating for a state amendment. Although some women had attempted to form an antisuffrage society as early as 1913, they founded no formal organization until NAOWS leader, Josephine Dodge, visited Nashville three years later. As a result of her speech, a group of women founded a local chapter of the NAOWS and appointed Virginia Vertrees as chairman. Almost immediately, however, Josephine Pearson

replaced her. Antisuffrage activity in Tennessee depended largely on a few individuals' consistent work rather than a large organization with many activists. Historians have uncovered few details of their activities, but the Tennessee chapter of the NAOWS mounted campaigns in both 1917 and 1919 against allowing women to have presidential suffrage.²⁹

Antisuffragists did not believe that Tennessee would be a likely candidate to ratify the federal amendment. Vertrees's husband, John a noted antisuffragist himself, advised Pearson that Tennessee could not ratify until after the election and that it was not important for women to vote in November 1920. Nevertheless, the NAOWS campaigned strongly to prevent Governor Roberts from calling a special session. Like the suffragists, they exerted pressure on the national political parties by writing to both Cox and Harding. Mrs. Horace Brock, who led the Republican women in the NAOWS, visited Harding to solicit his opposition to ratification. As suffragists sought legal opinions confirming the validity of ratification, so antisuffragists sought legal opinions from disinterested experts that ratification would be unconstitutional. Two of these allegedly disinterested parties, however, were John Tyson, whose name appeared on the SWRL's letterhead, and John Vertrees.³⁰

Although antisuffragists used similar methods to their opponents, they prided themselves on the differences between their tactics and those of suffragists. Antisuffragists did not picket the White House; they did not record information about congressmen on card indexes, and they did not use these indexes to "blackmail" congressmen into voting for their cause.³¹ In Tennessee, the SWRL strongly criticized the

suffragists' card index system. Further, the SWRL did not ask for pledges from legislators because its leadership believed that the men had already pledged themselves to voters and to the state constitution. The SWRL charged that demanding pledges showed a lack of faith in the legislators to decide for themselves.³² It compared suffragists' actions to that of a defendant trying to "pack a jury."³³ Antisuffragists objected to suffragists using outsiders to influence matters in Tennessee and argued that legislators should only consider the people of Tennessee in making their decision.³⁴

When it became apparent that Roberts would call a special session, antisuffrage leaders gathered in Tennessee to help the state's women in their campaign. Mary Kilbreth and Charlotte Rowe received assistance from Nina Pinckard, Anne Pleasant of Louisiana, Mrs. Lamar of Georgia, Mrs. Rufus Gibbs of Maryland, Mrs. Henry B. Thompson of Delaware, and Beatrice Shillito. Other women also helped the antisuffragists; Annie Brock of Knoxville had been a suffragist in California, but she did not see the improvement in politics that she had expected so she opposed ratification in Tennessee. Similarly, Mrs. George Wesley Smith from Louisiana had favored women's enfranchisement but changed her mind because she felt that it was a state, not a federal, matter. Kate Gordon, her sister Jean, and Laura Clay, the leading states' rights suffragists, were among the antirratificationists who joined the antisuffragists in trying to defeat ratification.³⁵

Male antisuffragists also organized themselves. At the end of July, a group of Nashville men announced that they would organize the Tennessee Constitutional League with the "sole" purpose of protecting the constitution, and its first aim was to defeat

woman suffrage.³⁶ The antisuffrage press insisted that protecting the constitution took priority, but the suffrage press had no illusions that the League's real aim was to defeat the amendment. The League sought to attract business people from all political parties, and the only woman lawyer in Nashville joined the organization. It was led by three Democrats, one of whom was John Vertrees, and three Republicans who claimed to be suffragists but who included the antisuffrage G. N. Tillman among their number. The League wrote to both Cox and Harding asking them to stay out of Tennessee's affairs. It also threatened to put forward an alternate candidate for governor so that Democrats who were unhappy with Roberts would have someone else for whom they could vote.³⁷

Neither Tennessee women nor national antisuffrage leaders appear to have campaigned in the primaries to ensure that antisuffrage men were elected to the Assembly. In July, however, they had distributed flyers that raised questions about black voting rights and the limitations to Tennessee's constitution. As always, they challenged the suffragists to defend their views. For instance, Nina Pinckard asked Catt why she argued that woman suffrage was in the southern tradition when the NAWSA supported miscegenation. Pinckard also maintained that Tennessee could not legally ratify a federal amendment until after the November election and that not keeping an oath was certainly against southern tradition.³⁸ Further, she quoted from an old speech of Catt's calling for suffragists to "train guns on [the] South."³⁹ Throughout the campaign, many antisuffrage flyers attacked Catt personally, accusing her of denying the Bible and lacking patriotism.⁴⁰

Antisuffragists also had to defend themselves against suffragists' attacks. When Catt maintained that outsiders would defeat the amendment, Pearson and Mrs. Morgan Brown retaliated by saying that Catt herself was an outsider. The SWRL defended its activists against Catt's charges because of their impeccable southern ancestry. Pinckard's great-uncle was southern statesman John C. Calhoun; Pleasant's father had been a major-general in the Army of Tennessee; Mrs. Wyse's brother was a Kentucky state senator. Kilbreth as president of the NAOWS had the same right to be present as did Catt herself, and Beatrice Shillito came from Ohio where they had defeated ratification so she wanted to prevent woman suffrage from being forced on her state.⁴¹ They argued that suffragists wanted Rowe out of Tennessee because she was dangerous to them.⁴² Certainly, Rowe's speeches dominated the press coverage, and Catt's refusal to debate her lends credence to that allegation.

Once in Nashville, the antisuffragists established themselves at the Hermitage Hotel and by 3 August had arranged a public exhibition there that displayed the *Woman's Bible*, the Force Acts, and an urn purportedly containing the ashes of Wilson's speeches. Stanton wrote the *Woman's Bible*, a radical document, that commented on the Bible from a feminist perspective. The federal government had designed the 1870 and 1871 Force Acts to protect black citizens' rights to vote, and these Acts recalled Southerners' worst fears of northern control following the Civil War. The NWP had burned Wilson's wartime speeches, which advocated fighting the war "for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own governments," in protest at women's political exclusion.⁴³ Thus, antisuffragists neatly tied woman suffrage to radical,

racial, and regional fears as well as to the allegation that suffragists were unpatriotic. They invited possible supporters and members of the Assembly to view the exhibition to ensure that members saw these damaging items before the session began.⁴⁴ In asking legislators to uphold southern ideals by rejecting the amendment, antisuffragists showed that they recognized the importance of the campaign in Tennessee. They did not believe that North Carolina would ratify, and they felt that if they could delay consideration by the other states until after the presidential election, nobody would retain any interest in ratifying the Nineteenth Amendment.

The SWRL leaders did not confine themselves to letter writing and exhibitions; they also made speeches opposing ratification to women's clubs. These speeches did not always totally oppose women's enfranchisement; sometimes they appealed for a state rather than a federal amendment.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, the antisuffragists mounted a more understated campaign than did the suffragists. Antisuffragists continued with their policy of claiming that they represented the silent majority; Mrs. George Washington had a "large following" that "silently" wished but would not act.⁴⁶ She held a tea attended by the state and national antisuffrage leaders on the day after the SWRL formally launched its campaign on 7 August at the Hermitage Hotel.⁴⁷

Fewer details of the antisuffragists' campaigns are available which makes comparisons with their opponents difficult. In Tennessee, however, they seem to have stressed their opposition to ratification rather than their aversion woman suffrage. They concentrated their campaign among elite women and members of the Assembly in Nashville rather than spreading their leaders too thinly across the state. Their strategy was

effective because they successfully framed the debate around the Assembly's right to ratify rather than the desirability of woman suffrage. They, therefore, tailored their campaign to suit the environment in which they found themselves. Since Tennessee's legislature had passed a law in 1919 that gave women presidential and municipal suffrage, some politicians were open to the possibility of change and the national enfranchisement of women. Tennessee itself, however, provided a rapidly changing environment for the campaign, leaving the final result hanging in the balance until the last moment. Thus, the outcome of the fight for ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment was impossible to predict.

ENDNOTES

1. Camhi, *Women Against Women*, 77-79.
2. Graham, *Woman Suffrage*, 34; Camhi, *Women Against Women*, 80.
3. Camhi, *Women Against Women*, 81-82.
4. Susan E. Marshall, *Splintered Sisterhood: Gender and Class in the Campaign against Woman Suffrage* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), 5; Jablonsky, *Home, Heaven, and Mother Party*, 9, 23-4; Camhi, *Women Against Women*, 86.
5. Catt and Shuler, *Woman Suffrage and Politics*, 109, 124; Jablonsky, *Home, Heaven, and Mother Party*, 8; Green, *Southern Strategies*, 105.
6. Green, *Southern Strategies*, 104; Jablonsky, *Home, Heaven, and Mother Party*, 8-9, 22, 16, 19.
7. Women were usually known by their husband's names. Thus, Josephine Dodge is frequently referred to as Mrs. Arthur Dodge. To bring these women into focus, I have elected to refer to them whenever possible by their own names. In those cases where I have been unable to find women's full names, I have used their married names.
8. Flexner, *Century of Struggle*, 257; Camhi, *Women Against Women*, 88, 94-96; Jablonsky, *Home, Heaven, and Mother Party*, 84, 86, 100.
9. Camhi, *Women Against Women*, 122; Jablonsky, *Home, Heaven, and Mother Party*, 98, 95, 84-5; Marshall, *Splintered Sisterhood*, 204; Green, *Southern Strategies*, 105.
10. Jablonsky, *Home, Heaven, and Mother Party*, 94; Camhi, *Women Against Women*, 123-5; Marshall, *Splintered Sisterhood*, 194; Irwin, *Woman's Party*, 18.
11. Jablonsky, *Home Heaven and Mother Party*, 104-6, 108-9.
12. Mrs. Morgan Brown, to "Gentlemen of the General Assembly", 4 August 1920, NWP Papers; Jablonsky, *Home, Heaven, and Mother Party*, 104-6, 108-9, 97; Camhi, *Women Against Women*, 137; Marshall, *Splintered Sisterhood*, 209.

13. *Chattanooga Times*, 2 August 1920, 3.
14. Green, *Southern Strategies*, 110.
15. Jablonsky, *Home, Heaven, and Mother Party*, 25, 84; Kraditor, *Ideas of Woman Suffrage*, 8.
16. Green, *Southern Strategies*, 58; Marshall, *Splintered Sisterhood*, 125, 107; Anastatia Sims, "Beyond the Ballot: The Radical Vision of the Antisuffragists," in *Votes for Women! The Woman Suffrage Movement in Tennessee, the South, and the Nation*, ed. Marjorie Spruill Wheeler (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1995), 107; Camhi, *Women Against Women*, 31, 19.
17. Marshall, *Splintered Sisterhood*, 134; Jablonsky, *Home, Heaven, and Mother Party*, 2.
18. Camhi, *Women Against Women*, 33, 9-10; Marshall, *Splintered Sisterhood*, 134, 4.
19. Taylor, *Woman Suffrage in Tennessee*, 117; Camhi, *Women Against Women*, 18, 21.
20. Jablonsky, *Home, Heaven, and Mother Party*, 43, 98-100; Camhi, *Women Against Women*, 67; Sims, "Beyond the Ballot," 113.
21. Camhi, 3; Green, *Southern Strategies*, 132, 86.
22. Camhi, *Women Against Women*, 11, 68; Marshall, *Splintered Sisterhood*, 4, xi, 127, 6.
23. Camhi, *Women Against Women*, 53.
24. Marshall, *Splintered Sisterhood*, 107; Camhi, *Women Against Women*, 53-6.
25. *Knoxville Sentinel*, 27 August 1920, 6; W. A. Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 85.
26. Camhi, *Women Against Women*, 7, 23, 33-4, 38; Jablonsky, *Home, Heaven, and Mother Party*, 38; Marshall, *Splintered Sisterhood*, 131.
27. Camhi, *Women Against Women*, 84, 39, 47-49.
28. Wheeler, *New Women*, 5, xiii; Green, *Southern Strategies*, 94.

29. Camhi, *Women Against Women*, 138-9; Green, *Southern Strategies*, 116; Taylor, *Woman Suffrage in Tennessee*, 81; Josephine Pearson, to Mrs. John Moore, 23 March 1939, Josephine A. Pearson Papers, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville; Sarah P. Bradford, Nashville to Josephine Pearson, 6 February 1917, Josephine A. Pearson Papers.
30. *Chattanooga Times*, 2 August 1920, 5; *Woman Patriot*, 17 July 1920, 3; Mrs. Morgan Brown, to "Gentlemen of the General Assembly," 4 August 1920, NWP Papers; Taylor, *Woman Suffrage in Tennessee*, 80.
31. *Woman Patriot*, 31 July 1920, 6.
32. *Woman Patriot*, 7 August 1920, 5; Mrs. Morgan Brown, to "Gentlemen of the General Assembly," Nashville, 4 August 1920, NWP Papers; *Woman Patriot*, 31 July 1920, 6.
33. Mrs. Morgan Brown, to "Gentlemen of the General Assembly," Nashville, 4 August 1920, NWP Papers.
34. Ibid.
35. *Woman Patriot*, 24 July 1920, 5; *Woman Patriot*, 7 August 1920, 5; *Woman Patriot*, 17 July 1920, 3; *Chattanooga Times*, 1 August 1920, 21; *Chattanooga Times*, 9 August 1920, 1; *Knoxville Journal*, 9 August 1920, 2.
36. *Chattanooga Times*, 1 August 1920, 6.
37. *Knoxville Journal and Tribune*, 29 July, 1920, 4; *Chattanooga Times*, 1 August 1920, 6; *Chattanooga Times*, 4 August 1920, 3; *Chattanooga Times*, 6 August 1920, 4, 7; *Chattanooga Times*, 12 August 1920, 1; Paul E. Isaac, "Defeat and Victory: The Republican Party in Tennessee, 1918-1920," *The East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications* 61 (1989): 62.
38. *Nashville Banner*, 25 July 1920, 11; Mrs. James Pinckard, "Questions for Mrs. Catt," 23 July 1920, NAWSA Papers.
39. *Nashville Banner*, 25 July 1920, 11.
40. "Mrs. Catt and Woman-Suffrage Leaders Repudiate the Bible" and "Mrs. Catt's Defamation of her Country," both in NAWSA Papers.

41. This was a lie; Ohio had in fact already ratified the amendment in June 1919. Katzenstein, *Lifting the Curtain*, 358.

42. *Knoxville Sentinel*, 6 August 1920, 14; *Chattanooga Times*, 6 August 1920, 7; *Chattanooga Times*, 7 August 1920, 6.

43. Irwin, *Woman's Party*, 207.

44. *Woman Patriot*, 7 August 1920, 1; *Knoxville Sentinel*, 4 August 1920, 4; Bucy, "Thrill of History Making," 233; Graham, *Woman Suffrage*, 44; Mrs. Morgan Brown, to "Gentlemen of the General Assembly", Nashville, 4 August 1920, NWP Papers; SWRL to "Madam", 3 August 1920, Carrie Chapman Catt Papers Tennessee State Library and Archives.

45. *Nashville Banner*, 6 August 1920, 18.

46. *Chattanooga Times*, 15 August 1920, 5.

47. *Nashville Banner*, 5 August 1920, 5.

CHAPTER 3--THE STATE OF TENNESSEE

Tennessee was not a homogenous state; its "grand divisions" represented discrete political regions. These divisions had evolved from geographical differences that dictated disparate economic development. East Tennessee is mountainous, and in 1920, its population consisted largely of small farmers who supported the Republican Party. Nevertheless, this division had an industrial base that included hosiery mills, foundries, and furniture factories. In west Tennessee, fertile land near the Mississippi meant that plantations dominated an agricultural economy, which resulted in a higher black population; this division mainly voted Democratic. Between these regions, middle Tennessee had a mixed agricultural economy based primarily on grass that fed livestock, especially horses. It also had some cotton plantations and generally supported the Democratic Party. State laws of Tennessee fixed these divisions into the state's political structure by making them into judicial areas and decreeing that each division should supply three railroad commissioners and one tax assessor.¹ The three "grand divisions" even appear on Tennessee's state flag as three stars; therefore, these divisions had, and still have today, a political basis. Suffragists would, therefore, have to convince legislators representing different constituencies and with a variety of political opinions to

vote for their cause. These men would also have to consider the economic and social opinions of their constituents.

In 1920, Tennessee was undergoing changes that caused tension between rural and urban areas. Although most men still earned their living from agriculture, they were moving into industrial work at a rate faster than the national average. Industry now produced more income than did agriculture. As industrial output increased so did the urban population. Twenty-six percent of Tennessee's population lived in urban areas, and 41 percent of counties had towns with a population greater than 2500. These economic and social changes threatened, but had not yet overturned, the political influence of rural areas. Inequitable taxation between rural and urban areas aggravated tensions between them. Counties were the unit of taxation, and despite efforts to prevent corruption, assessments were used to threaten political opponents. Inequitable taxation generally remained an issue in 1920. Urbanization also introduced new pressures on the state government by increasing the demand for education, conservation, and public health. Unfortunately, Tennessee's political system hindered the management of change. The 1870 constitution had given power to the legislature but decreed that it should meet for only seventy-five days on alternate years. Therefore, it could rarely offer clear direction as the state's residents struggled to cope with the challenges of the twentieth-century.²

Despite Tennessee's geographic and economic contrasts, its population had little ethnic variety. Tennessee had a primarily white native-born population with a substantial black minority, but it had attracted few immigrants. Moreover, the state had a declining black population, both absolutely and relative to its white population. Over the past ten

years, the black population had fallen by 21,000 so that by 1920 blacks formed only 19 percent of the state's citizens. Although many blacks had doubtless left the state to seek increased opportunities in the North during World War I, an even larger number had left between 1900 and 1910. Whites also migrated at a similar rate. Although the state's blacks had increasingly moved to urban areas in search of work, most of them remained in rural areas. Nevertheless, approximately 38 percent of blacks now lived in towns where they constituted almost 28 percent of the population. Still, the proportion varied greatly depending on the city. For instance, Knoxville's population doubled between 1910 and 1922, but the percentage of blacks declined to 15 percent of the city's inhabitants, whereas, 40 percent of Memphis's citizens were black.³

Across the state, blacks and whites lived in segregated housing, worked in segregated employment, learned in segregated schools, and rode in segregated transportation. The relationship between the races, however, also varied by city. Black men typically voted Republican, and they were more likely to be able to vote if they lived in towns. Tennessee had a small poll tax that weakened poor men's, especially poor black men's, ability to vote. Middle-class blacks, however, built some connections with their white counterparts though their opportunities varied by city. Nashville, especially, had a vigorous black middle-class with access to wealthy whites. Although blacks tried to initiate progressive reforms, they had minimal power to reform white institutions. For instance, it took them twelve years to persuade the state to provide correctional facilities for black juveniles. Even when blacks tried to reform their own community, whites appropriated and diminished their efforts. In Memphis, black Republican leader Robert

Church Jr. supplied black votes to Democratic political boss Mayor Edward H. Crump in return for improved facilities for blacks. Knoxville blacks made less attempt to change the paternalistic attitudes offered to them. Nevertheless, Knoxville was the only Tennessee city to suffer a riot in August 1919, when a white mob attempted to lynch a black man accused of murder. The violence shocked Tennessee especially since it was unexpected in Knoxville. The city worked hard to prevent a recurrence, not by improving the limited educational and occupational opportunities available to blacks but by strengthening law enforcement measures so that in 1921 officials could prevent a riot in a similar situation.⁴

Tennessee had limited the black vote from 1889 using the excuse that they had voted against prohibition in the 1887 referendum. In fact, white voters had also voted against the statewide prohibition amendment. Democrats disliked federal assurance of black voting rights and blacks using their political leverage to gain patronage. Once it became apparent that the federal government would not prevent voting restrictions, Democrats passed laws implementing a secret ballot, demanding voter registration, and providing separate ballot boxes for state and federal elections. The state constitution already provided for a poll tax that the legislature now enforced.⁵

Politics also reflected the state's diversity, although third parties did not fare well in Tennessee. The different economic and social situations in each division militated against a "statewide political leadership."⁶ Instead, factional politics predominated though Democrats in middle and western Tennessee usually cooperated to prevent Republicans from securing statewide offices. When the Democrats did not stay united, however, the

Republican Party could win the governorship. Such an eventuality had only occurred three times between 1870 and 1920. In the 1890 election, the Alliance candidate won the gubernatorial election because he remained within the Democratic Party. Despite its perceived radicalism, the Alliance in Tennessee did not organize the People's Party there as it did in other states nor did it ally with blacks. Instead, the Union Labor Party founded the People's Party. Their candidates fared badly in 1892 because they threatened to split the Democrats so the Bourbon leaders united with New South industrialists to destroy the People's Party.⁷

By 1920, Crump, Luke Lea, and Edward B. Stahlman, each dominated a Democratic faction. Ex-Senator Lea owned the *Nashville Tennessean* newspaper and gleaned his support from the rural areas of Middle Tennessee. Stahlman, who had been an officer and lobbyist for the Louisville and Nashville Railroad, now owned the *Nashville Banner*.⁸ These men had become political opponents as a result of the prohibition battle.

Prohibition had been an issue in Tennessee for many years, but it became increasingly debated in 1908. Edward Ward Carmack, who was upset at losing his seat as United States senator, ran against the incumbent, Malcolm Patterson, for the Democratic gubernatorial nomination. Carmack made prohibition the major issue by advocating statewide prohibition. Since Patterson favored a local option, he posed a lesser threat to the brewing industry. The United States Brewers' Association (USBA), therefore, supported him by contributing fifteen million dollars to his election campaign. When Patterson won the nomination and the election, Carmack became the editor of the *Nashville Tennessean* and used his position to attack both Patterson and his ally Duncan

Brown Cooper as tools of the liquor industry. His editorials incensed Cooper. Although differing accounts of subsequent events exist, apparently Cooper and his son, Robin, met Carmack one night, and Robin shot Carmack dead. Both father and son were found guilty, although the elder Cooper never fired a shot. His son was acquitted on appeal, and Governor Patterson pardoned the father. John K. Shields, Tennessee's Chief Justice, accused Patterson, who controlled the judicial primaries, of forcing judges to give a favorable opinion on the Cooper case by threatening them with losing their seats on the bench.⁹

When Patterson vetoed a statewide prohibition bill the following year, the prohibition Democrats, those who disapproved of Patterson's handling of the Carmack killing, and those who opposed the new primary system, united to form a new party of Independent Democrats. Not all the Independent Democrats favored prohibition, but they all voted with the Republicans in the General Assembly to pass the bill over Patterson's veto. The Independent Democrats failed to prevent Patterson's nomination for the 1910 election though they succeeded in nominating their own candidates for the judiciary. In the election, Independent Democratic and Republican voters fused to elect a Republican, Ben Hooper, to the governorship.¹⁰

Democratic voters in both middle and west Tennessee abandoned their party affiliation to cast their votes for Hooper because he favored prohibition. The electorate chose the legislative candidates the same way, which resulted in a fusionist House and Democratic Senate. With no party in control, the legislature could achieve little. When the Regular Democrats in the Senate passed a bill giving them power to control election

commissions over Hooper's veto, fusionists in the House broke the quorum by going to Alabama. United States Senator Luke Lea brokered an agreement that would allow the election law to remain unchanged, prevent the passage of further laws enforcing prohibition, and institute a new direct primary. Crump supported the deal, but Stahlman saw the refusal to enforce prohibition rigorously as evidence that Lea had become a "wet." Henceforth, the Nashville political machine, supported by Stahlman, opposed Lea.¹¹

After the 1912 election, the Regular Democrats regained control of the General Assembly, but Hooper retained his position as governor. Memphis, Nashville, and Chattanooga remained the last outposts of opposition to prohibition. Hooper, therefore, introduced legislation to allow him to remove Crump from his position as mayor so that he could renege on Lea's agreement and enact further laws enforcing prohibition. Crump retaliated by compelling the Shelby delegation to support the Regular Democrats, and Lea withdrew his backing because Hooper had violated the agreement.¹² Thus, the Regular Democrats managed to gain control of the election machinery over Hooper's veto and a fusionist attempt to break the quorum. Reconciliation only came in 1914 when enough Democrats managed to agree on prohibition to get a Democrat, Tom Rye, elected as governor. Rye favored statewide prohibition, supported rural areas, and opposed city bosses. Rye's election nominally reunited the Democrats, however, the scars remained to influence future issues.¹³

Although Crump tightly controlled Memphis's elections and legislators, his influence was not all negative. His informal agreement with Church allowed black men in

Memphis to vote, and he favored woman suffrage. As a reforming mayor he was "scrupulously honest" refusing favors from industry himself and preventing others from accepting them.¹⁴ His aversion to the railroad's power, an antipathy he shared with Lea, spurred him successfully to collect its back taxes. Since he opposed prohibition, he refused to enforce the statewide prohibition legislation enacted in 1909. Rye persisted with Hooper's legislation to oust officials who did not enforce the law, and in 1915 Crump was ousted. Nevertheless, he continued as Memphis's political boss. Crump and Lea's alliance did not endure, and as a result in 1917, Lea lost his seat as United States senator to Kenneth D. McKellar who remained Crump's ally.¹⁵

Despite opposition from Lea, support from Crump and Stahlman was sufficient to elect Democrat Albert H. Roberts governor in 1919. He came to power promising to redesign the tax structure in which farmers bore the burden of taxation while railroads and corporations successfully limited their tax liability. Similarly, urban areas contributed more to the state treasury than did rural areas but received less in return. Tennessee needed to collect taxes fairly and efficiently to replenish its two million dollar deficit. Roberts's new tax law necessitated reassessing property values, and the assessors ultimately came under Roberts's control. Many worried that the new system gave the governor too much power at the expense of local leaders. During his term of office, Roberts also alienated labor by using the National Guard in 1920 to break a street-railway strike and a shoe factory strike in Knoxville. By the 1920 primary, therefore, Roberts's political position was extremely precarious.¹⁶

The Republican Party also had two factions that had arisen from Reconstruction. The "Black and Tans" and the "Lily Whites" differed on their attitudes to black political participation and whether or not they should bargain with the Democrats. Robert B. Church Jr. struggled to ensure that black Republicans received the recognition they deserved from their party. Nevertheless, race was not the only issue that divided the factions by 1920; they largely represented two sides of a power struggle for control of the party. At the national party convention, Tennessee's delegates did not strongly support Warren G. Harding's nomination as presidential candidate.¹⁷

Factions in both parties presented problems because they were evenly matched; Tennessee did not have statewide, strong, interest groups or united powerful elites. Even businessmen lacked sufficient influence to prevent the reappointment of a Food and Drug Commissioner whom they opposed. Factions were not rigid; instead, they represented loose coalitions that changed frequently depending on the issue and individual leaders' beliefs, which makes determining their allegiances difficult.¹⁸

Both Jesse Littleton, a contender for the Republican nomination, and Roberts's opponent for the Democratic nomination, W. R. Crabtree, supported woman suffrage. Suffragists doubted Roberts's commitment to their cause, but he promised to call a special session after the primary. His nomination, however, was not certain. During the primary campaign, both the *Tennessean* and the *Banner* published allegations that Roberts's female stenographer had loose morals. Although Martha Horne left Roberts's employ before the primary, both the NAWSA and the NWP leadership worried about the effect that Tennessee's political climate would have on ratification. The rumors about

Roberts and Horne caused Democratic factions to regroup either in support of or in opposition to the governor. Further, Roberts alienated more Democrats when he tried to prevent the state convention from censuring United States Senator John K. Shields for opposing the League of Nations. Roberts opposed the censure because he thought that it would divide the party, but League supporters doubted Roberts's commitment to the League. When Roberts subsequently approved the censure, he left himself open to accusations of inconsistency and disloyalty and earned himself Shields's enmity.¹⁹

Despite a dirty campaign, Roberts managed to retain his party's nomination. Although his opponents alleged that either he would fail to call the session or he would undermine the amendment, he immediately called a special session of the General Assembly to consider a variety of measures, notably, the ratification of the federal amendment on woman suffrage. The NWP blamed Roberts's lack of enthusiasm for the amendment on his fear that women would not vote for him because of the moral issues raised in the primary. Roberts's political allies pulled him in different directions. Some, such as Cox, favored woman suffrage; others, such as L. D. Smith, the chief attorney for the Southern Railroad, opposed the measure. By 29 July, Smith claimed to support woman suffrage but relied on the limitation in Tennessee's constitution to oppose ratification. Although Shields favored suffrage, his recent clash with Roberts rendered his impact uncertain.²⁰ The special session would, therefore, begin in an atmosphere of uncertainty.

In 1920, then, Tennessee was in a state of transition. Economic changes had forced demographic changes that had led to urban areas trying to wrest control from

discontented rural areas. Although both rural inhabitants and city dwellers supported prohibition, it had become a significant aspect of rural areas' attempts to control corrupt cities, and the resulting battle had left political and social scars.²¹ The government was still not managing change well; the governor was losing popularity. Unpredictable, factional politics ruled the state, in which both politicians and voters changed their allegiances depending on the issues and on personal relationships. Despite all these changes, however, Tennessee remained mainly rural and mainly white with leaders that retained power despite attempts to curb their influence. Black people had little control over their own destiny and had little influence in the white polity. The state's women also had to cope with these changes and other challenges peculiar to their own roles.

ENDNOTES

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3. Margaret Ripley Wolfe, *Lucius Polk Brown and Progressive Food and Drug Control: Tennessee and New York City* (Lawrence, KS: The Regents Press of Kansas, 1978), 5; Lee, *Tennessee in Turmoil*, 5, 6, 15.
4. Don H. Doyle, *Nashville in the New South 1880-1930* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985), 113-4, 117; Lee, *Tennessee in Turmoil*, 15-6; James E. Thorogood, *A Financial History of Tennessee since 1870* (Nashville: Tennessee Industrial School, 1949), 47; Kousser, *Southern Politics*, 64-5; Lamon, *Black Tennesseans*, 44-5, 53, 89, 209-10, 218, 220, 222, 244, 246-7, 253-4.
5. Folmsbee, Corlew and Mitchell, *Tennessee*, 397; Cartwright, *Triumph of Jim Crow*, 205-6, 208-9, 216-7.
6. Lee, *Tennessee in Turmoil*, 10.
7. Majors, *Change and Continuity*, 26-7, 113; Hicks, *Populist Revolt*, 178, 267; Robert C. McMath Jr., *Populist Vanguard: A History of the Southern Farmers' Alliance* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 66-68, 137, 122.
8. Lee, *Tennessee in Turmoil*, 2, 10-14; Vile and Byrnes, "Voting Patterns," 2; Majors, *Change and Continuity*, 11; Maury Klein, *History of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1972), 377; Tidwell, *Luke Lea*, 178.

9. Tidwell, *Luke Lea*, 18-9, 23, 30; Wolfe, *Lucius Polk Brown*, 50; Congress, Senate, Subcommittee on the Judiciary, *Report and Hearings of the Subcommittee on the Judiciary United States Senate submitted pursuant to S. Res. 307 and 439 sixty-fifth congress relating to charges made against the United States Brewers' Association and Allied Interests in 3 volumes*, Vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1919), 1055, 837; Isaac, *Prohibition and Politics*, 185.
10. Wolfe, *Lucius Polk Brown*, 50; Tidwell, *Luke Lea*, 25, 30-32.
11. Isaac, *Prohibition and Politics*, 194; Wolfe, *Lucius Polk Brown*, 65; Lee, *Tennessee in Turmoil*, 12; Tidwell, *Luke Lea*, 32, 42-44, 179, 62.
12. Memphis is in Shelby County, west Tennessee.
13. Isaac, *Prohibition and Politics*, 214; Tidwell, *Luke Lea*, 49, 66, 50-1, 53; Wolfe, *Lucius Polk Brown*, 73.
14. William R. Majors, "A Re-examination of V. O. Key's *Southern Politics in State and Nation: The Case of Tennessee*," *The East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications* 49 (1977): 120.
15. William D. Miller, *Mr. Crump of Memphis* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1964), 103, 80, 91-2, 106, 108, 113, 117, 134; Tidwell, *Luke Lea*, 291, 68, 72, 74; Lee, *Tennessee in Turmoil*, 13-14; Majors, "A Re-examination of V. O. Key," 132.
16. Lee, *Tennessee in Turmoil*, 19; *Knoxville Journal and Tribune*, 8 January 1919, 5; Gary W. Reichard, "The Defeat of Governor Roberts," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 30 (winter 1971): 95-7; David Carleton, "The Governorship," in *Tennessee Government and Politics: Democracy in the Volunteer State*, ed. John R. Vile and Mark Byrnes (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1998), 44.
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18. Wolfe, *Lucius Polk Brown*, 152; Tidwell, *Luke Lea*, 67, 68, 132; Majors "A Re-Examination of V. O. Key, 135.

19.Reichard, "Defeat of Governor Roberts," 102, 98-9; *Chattanooga Times*, 4 August 1920, 1; Catt and Shuler, *Woman Suffrage and Politics*, 430; Sims, "Powers that Pray," 210; *Suffragist*, August 1920, 164.

20.*Chattanooga Times*, 7 August 1920, 4; *Chattanooga Times*, 8 August 1920, 2; Catt and Shuler, *Woman Suffrage and Politics*, 430; *Nashville Banner*, 2 August 1920, 1; Anita Pollitzer, Knoxville, to Alice Paul, [Washington, D.C.], 29 July 1920, NWP Papers.

21.Majors, *Change and Continuity*, 54; Timberlake, *Prohibition*, 29.

CHAPTER 4--THE WOMEN OF TENNESSEE

Women's lives throughout the nation were changing in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries as they increased their participation in education, employment, and public life. These national trends affected women in Tennessee, but as a border state, it shared many southern ideals that restricted women's opportunities compared with those available to northern women.

In the North, woman's rights advocates had demanded that women receive educational opportunities comparable to those available to men. Before the Civil War, the South had also advocated educating women, but the war had hindered the development of collegiate education for both sexes. Education in the ex-Confederate states, therefore, lagged behind that of the rest of the country. Southern women had some opportunities not available to their northern counterparts, however. For instance, southern school examinations entailed public speaking and performing, which was frowned upon for northern women. Nevertheless, educational standards remained lower in the South. In Tennessee, this deficiency primarily affected the middle class, which saw education as a method of advancement. Wealthy planters could afford to pay private tutors to educate their children at home and then send their daughters to finishing schools outside the state. Although these women received a good, liberal arts education, it prepared them to

provide intellectual companionship for prospective husbands, not to work outside the home.¹

In 1920, university education for Tennessee women continued in this vein. Private universities, mostly founded by churches, educated young women whose parents could afford to pay. For instance, the Presbyterians established Cumberland Female College, the Methodists financed Wesleyan Female College, and the Methodist Episcopal church founded Tennessee Female College. Few female colleges, however, offered a university education. One exception was Mary Sharp College, founded by the Baptists, which was the first female college to make Latin and Greek compulsory for graduation and was more like a university than any other similar institution in the state.

The southern Methodists had founded Vanderbilt in 1873, but they had severed their ties by 1914. Although a male college, Vanderbilt had a few female students who did not attend regularly, did not matriculate, and were not even registered. They could earn a degree if they fulfilled the requirements, but only two had done so by 1893. White colleges were, as one historian has noted, "only nominally coeducational."² As early as 1887, Vanderbilt's faculty had wanted to admit women on the same terms as men, but the board of trustees refused.³ By 1920, however, a diploma from Vanderbilt became a necessity for the daughters of Nashville's wealthy business community as a passport to an advantageous marriage.⁴ Now a part of Vanderbilt, the George Peabody College for Teachers was established separately in 1873 with thirteen female pupils. In time, it taught history and science besides education, but in 1909 a legacy from Peabody reestablished it

as a teacher training college. Thus, it accorded with public universities that primarily trained women for a teaching career.

The University of Tennessee grew out of a long-established institution named Blount College. Blount had admitted five females in 1804, but no other women followed them. In 1869, it became a state agricultural college and then the University of Tennessee ten years later. Women, who sought training as teachers, began enrolling regularly only after 1893.⁵ Tennessee's General Assembly now tried to limit women's access to education by arguing that public funds should be devoted to "agricultural and mechanical arts."⁶ In a response typical of the times, the University added domestic science to the curriculum in 1897 to accommodate women and the Assembly's view of subjects suitable for their study. In 1909, the General Assembly established three public teacher training schools for whites, one in each division of the state. One of these institutions, East Tennessee State University, not only taught girls but also employed ten women among the twenty-two original faculty.⁷

Even the limited education available to women did not demand high standards. White women founded the Southern Association of College Women at the University of Tennessee in 1903 to improve educational standards in the region. Twelve years later, the association reported that no colleges in Tennessee had yet reached the required standard. Similarly, the Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools of the Southern States, established at Vanderbilt in 1895, mentioned only one institution, Tennessee College, as approximating the educational standards required for colleges in 1917.⁸

Black women had even fewer educational opportunities than had white women, and their education primarily consisted of industrial training in needlework, the culinary arts, nursing, and typing. Several facilities across the state offered training in these fields, such as the Howe Institute and the Le Moyne Institute in Memphis. Teaching black children represented the highest position to which black women could aspire. Following the Civil War, northern philanthropists financed colleges for blacks. In Nashville alone, Fisk University, Central Tennessee College, and Roger Williams University all taught black women.⁹ Fisk provided "mental, moral, and religious culture" besides industrial training.¹⁰ Roger Williams University, founded by the Baptists, provided four-year college courses, but students had to work an hour each day for the university to "dignify labor."¹¹ Whites always controlled these black institutions, and in 1910 Roger Williams University student protests forced the resignation of the white president because he did not respect his black students. Despite support from the black community, however, they failed to achieve their demand that a black president replace him.¹²

By 1909, there was still no black public university in the South. Theoretically, qualified black men had been eligible for admission to the University of Tennessee, but the few who qualified went to Fisk. In practice, once significant numbers of black men qualified for university admission, the University of Tennessee established a special department for them in Knoxville. When the General Assembly provided the three universities to train white teachers in 1909, it also established one for blacks. This university, destined to become Tennessee State University, took longer to build than the

three white institutions and received only half the funding. It conformed to most black colleges by being coeducational.¹³

Once educated, white women found work as teachers, nurses, social workers, librarians, secretaries, clerks, or writers. By 1920, women represented 18 percent of Tennessee's workforce. Three female lawyers belonged to Tennessee's Bar Association and could vote to nominate a candidate for Supreme Court Judge. The Bar Association came out for woman suffrage in August 1918. Although professional women represented a small minority of the workforce, lack of education did not prevent women from working. Nevertheless, they had a limited range of occupations open to them. Most white women worked in jobs that were an extension of their work in the home, such as dressmaking and millinery, dairying, and housekeeping. These women were mostly single or widowed; white married women rarely worked outside the home unless their husbands were incapacitated.¹⁴

Black women performed different types of work from white women and typically continued working for pay during marriage. They worked mostly in manual occupations in agriculture or as laundresses, cooks, or domestic servants. Despite the beginnings of urbanization in Tennessee most women of both races still lived in rural areas, which meant that wage-earning women labored primarily in agriculture or in mills. Hosiery mills dyed, bleached, and finished cloth; other mills produced cotton yarn and twine, and all chiefly employed women.¹⁵

Concentrating on a sample from the 1920 census of one hundred females over ten years of age who lived in Memphis provides the best illustration of urban women's lives.

Of these, only thirty-four worked. The working women comprised nineteen black women, fourteen white women, and one immigrant woman; the latter worked as a saleswoman in a store. Sixteen black women worked as domestic servants, two labored in manufacturing, and one taught. Five white women had clerical occupations, two labored in manufacturing, two were saleswomen, two worked as domestic servants, and two taught. One white woman worked in the new occupation of telephone operator.¹⁶

These figures clearly show that women's work opportunities depended on their race. Although over the previous twenty years Memphis had seen the proportion of women working in manufacturing increase and that involved in domestic service decrease, the number of women in clerical work increased more than eight times. White native-born women from the rural areas joined the workforce as clerical staff.¹⁷ Thus, they took the new opportunities open to women leaving black women to continue in domestic service. Clearly, white women also had more choice of work since they were found in a greater variety of occupations.

This sample does not reveal the whole story because it shows black and white women holding equal numbers of manufacturing jobs. For census purposes, however, manufacturing included dressmaking at home, an occupation that black women dominated. Moreover, black women who worked in manufacturing industries mostly worked as laborers, while white women performed the semiskilled tasks. Even in domestic service, black women worked as laundresses or servants while white women ran boarding houses. Black teachers were fewer in number and limited to teaching in black schools for lower pay than their white colleagues. Overall, in 1920 Memphis, most white

women did not work for wages, and those who did so predominately labored in low status jobs.¹⁸ Even fewer opportunities were available to black women.

Not all women moved into public life by joining the workforce; many embraced the club movement. In Nashville, elite white women joined their husbands in the Nashville Art Association in 1883; however, they soon developed clubs that reflected their own interests. Literary clubs were popular with both single women, who founded the Query Club in 1883, and married women, who established the Review Club in 1885. Jewish women had their own literary club named the Magazine Circle. White women in Tennessee also joined such associations as the Daughters of the American Revolution, the United States Daughters of 1812, and the United Daughters of the Confederacy. The latter organization especially played a role in glorifying southern bravery in the Civil War and sustaining the myth of a superior southern culture.¹⁹

Women not only joined self-improvement clubs and commemorative clubs they also founded philanthropic organizations. As early as 1837, Nashville women had established interdenominational organizations to manage the Protestant Orphan's Asylum and the Protestant School of Industry. Similar charitable organizations followed in the 1870s, such as the Woman's Mission Home and the Nashville Relief Society. Church organizations drew women into public life, but churches themselves did not allow women any power over those organizations. In 1897, women formed the Centennial Woman's Board to organize the woman's exhibition at the state's Centennial Exposition. Although the organization ended in 1900, it reemerged in 1905 as the Centennial Club that tried to improve sanitation and organize civic improvement in Nashville. By 1908, however, it

had faded into yet another literary club. One organization that retained its mission was the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA). Middle-class women founded the Nashville YWCA in 1898 to provide facilities for young working-class women who arrived in town to work. The YWCA building they built provided a meeting place for many women's organizations. Although the YWCA never endorsed the Nineteenth Amendment, suffragists held meetings in its building.²⁰

White charities catered to white needs; blacks in need looked to their own race for help. As in their working lives, therefore, women segregated their social lives by race. Each community, however, had similar organizations. In 1895, black women formed the Phyllis Wheatley Club to pursue a variety of aims, such as caring for hospital patients and working for prison reform. The Knoxville Homemakers' Club, formed in 1913, offered evening classes and campaigned for compulsory school attendance. Black women believed that if they encouraged their communities to live up to high behavioral standards, whites would not segregate them. To this end, black middle-class women, like their white contemporaries, tried to control the lower classes and the youth. Church organizations offered black women the opportunity to speak freely and to improve conditions for their race. For instance, black Baptist women worked within their community to organize Bible Bands. As in the white churches, the black Baptist church drew women into public participation but also discouraged them from assuming leadership roles. Although Tennessee had fifty-seven Bible Bands by 1892, ministers felt threatened by women teaching the Bible and closed their churches to them.²¹

Rarely, individuals worked alone to right wrongs. In the 1880s, Ida B. Wells had campaigned against lynching in Memphis until threats from whites forced her to flee to Chicago. While not specifically a women's organization, Wells helped found the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). By 1919, the NAACP had branches in Chattanooga, Memphis, Nashville, and Knoxville. Black women used the NAACP to campaign for reforms that interested them, such as improving public restrooms for blacks and reforming "dives and dance halls."²² In Memphis, other black women formed the Association for the Protection of Colored Women to provide a Working Girls' Home to save young women newly arrived in the city from being lured into prostitution.²³

Women of different races sometimes worked together in Nashville. For instance, black and white men and women of the Southern Methodist Home Mission Society ran a settlement in Nashville. Despite its name, this organization was interdenominational. Similarly, when the board of the YWCA wanted to expand its activities to include a branch for black women, they turned to middle-class black women to organize it. Although black women formed an organizational committee, the white board had to approve all its decisions. White women did not sympathize with black women's differences so the black branch was beset with conflicts; for instance, they could not even choose their own president. Black women consented to work with white women even in such difficult circumstances because they shared the same immediate goal of helping the less fortunate. Black women had different long-term aims from white, however. They

wanted to help their race by showing high moral standards and improving education while white women wanted to ensure that blacks remained in a subservient position.²⁴

Tennessee women preferred to organize at their own pace. They were initially slow to join the temperance crusade. In 1878, interested women had found it difficult to stimulate Tennessee women to establish a branch of the WCTU. The organization existed from 1873, but Tennessee did not gain its own branch in 1882. Black women were not far behind; they organized their own state union in 1886 electing Mrs. C. H. Phillips of Memphis as their first president. For most southern women, the WCTU represented their first opportunity to organize inter denominationally, but Tennessee women had already bridged the religious divide. While the 1887 WCTU convention, which was held in Nashville, voted to support woman suffrage, the organization did not campaign for women's enfranchisement. Nevertheless, WCTU women thought that they would secure prohibition by enfranchising women; therefore, they worked for both causes. For instance, the McMinnville branch of the WCTU upset local opinion when it used suffrage colors of purple, green, and yellow in its decorations for the state convention.²⁵

Members of the WCTU participated in election campaigns on the prohibition issue both by standing outside polling stations to influence voters and by singing hymns during votes in the General Assembly. In the 1908 election, the WCTU may have hurt the prohibition cause because they received criticism for such activities. After Edward Ward Carmack's murder gave the prohibition cause a martyr, his body was sent home for burial by train, and WCTU members lined the route to the platform. Since the WCTU supported candidates for political office based on their stand on prohibition and campaigned

strongly for those candidates, it can be seen as a political organization. Tennessee politics, however, sometimes dictated that the WCTU had to be nonpartisan because its leaders differed from its members on which party or faction to support.²⁶

All these organizations existed in cities, but in 1920 most Tennessee women still lived in rural areas. They did not have the leisure time necessary for such activities in summertime, and winter made many rural roads impassable. Urban women had historically scorned their rural counterparts for wasting their intellect, but rural women denied that working hard meant that they lacked refinement. To ease the isolation and drudgery in farm women's work and to encourage young women to remain on the land, rural women had joined the agricultural association known as the Grange after the Civil War. Granges were not exclusively female organizations, but they allowed middle-class women to expand their domestic sphere. Their meetings aimed to teach women how to modernize their domestic working methods. Still, women had few opportunities to exercise leadership in the Grange; Tennessee's state association dissolved in 1906 without having ever had any female officers. The Grange also interested itself in political issues. It approved prohibition and had a close relationship with the WCTU. Although it supported woman suffrage, its populist inclination made it appear a radical organization, which did not aid suffragists who already had to contend with allegations of radicalism.²⁷

These same rural women also joined the more politically active Farmers' Alliance. Although Alliance men claimed that women received equal treatment in their organization, that was not true; no woman served as an officer in Tennessee. Since

Alliance membership in Tennessee declined steeply after 1892, rural women had no obvious source of interest outside the farm by World War I.²⁸

One institution tried to involve both urban and rural women, and that was the Tennessee Women's Auxiliary to the Southern Commercial Congress. This organization aimed to unite the South and improve relations between it and the rest of the world. For instance, the Women's Auxiliary campaigned for teaching Spanish in schools so that Tennessee could take advantage of trade with South America through the Panama Canal. The organization's state president, Louise Grundy Lindsley, encouraged rural women to work on local issues such as health, education, and road improvement.²⁹

World War I encouraged Tennessee women to found more associations. One such organization built on the Grange women's objectives. The Tennessee Division of the National Housewives League supported the United States' entry into the war and aimed to make housework more "scientific and efficient."³⁰ During the war, Tennessee also had a Division of the Women's Committee of the Council of National Defense, which organized women's war work. Not everyone saw women's contribution to war as worthwhile. John Vertrees deplored women organizing their own war work because he saw war as men's business. Women should contribute only by undertaking the tasks that men assigned to them.³¹

This picture of Tennessee, its politics, its women, its suffragists and their opponents, does not explain why it ratified the Nineteenth Amendment. In 1920, Tennessee was undergoing change, but those changes were still in their early stages. It was a conservative state; the Scopes trial that would deny teachers the opportunity to

teach evolution in schools was still five years in the future. Although women were beginning to move into the workforce, their contribution was still limited. While they had begun to adopt public activities, those activities were still largely within their sphere. Moreover, members of suffrage societies represented only about 4 percent of the possible female voting population.³² Suffragists were not, therefore, generally representative of Tennessee's female population. Thus, they faced a difficult task ahead of them to convince their state to ratify the federal amendment given the weight of tradition, their small numbers, and strength of the continuing opposition. The story that follows shows Tennessee's legislators on a knife-edge as they tried to decide whether to enfranchise American women.

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CHAPTER 5--THE TENNESSEE CAMPAIGN

Several themes recurred throughout the brief but intense campaign for ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment in Tennessee. Despite the differences between the groups of women campaigning, they used many similar tactics, and both sides used questionable methods to achieve their ends. Although the national parties continued to press their case, they receded into the background as the state's powerful men entered the fray. State politics began to impinge on the outcome, and the state press contributed to framing and inflaming the debate. As the scenario unfolded, predicting the outcome became more uncertain for suffragists and antisuffragists alike. Momentum swung first one way and then the other, increasing the tension and leaving behind frayed tempers. Legislators dithered and risked allegations of bribery when they changed their minds. Thus, the outcome eventually rested on one vote.

Tennessee's ratification campaign was underway even before Governor Roberts called a special session since both suffragists and antisuffragists were demanding support from the national political parties. As both Cox and Harding came from Ohio, NWP organizer Abby Scott Baker remained there to keep her organization's interest before them throughout the campaign. The NWP did not limit its demands for support to the main political parties. Surreptitiously, since it risked censure for allying with labor, it

organized a speaking tour for Parley P. Christensen, the presidential candidate for the Farm Labor Party, to encourage labor support for ratification.¹ Despite some criticism arising from Christensen's presence, the strategy worked because Tennessee's state Federation of Labor endorsed woman suffrage at its annual convention in Knoxville shortly after the special session began. Christensen tactfully left Tennessee the day before its Senate ratified the amendment. The NWP also solicited support from Irish Republicans who might persuade any legislators of Irish descent to vote for woman suffrage. Its organizer, Anita Pollitzer, tried to find another man with a military background similar to that of Senator Herschel Mahoney Candler to write to the senator supporting the legality of a ratification vote and urging him to support his party by voting for the amendment.²

Alice Paul had established the NWP in 1916 to provide scope for enfranchised women to help their disfranchised sisters. Thus, when the battle moved to Tennessee, the NWP could solicit support from the relevant women outside the state. For instance, suffragists in Colorado asked Republicans in their state to urge Hal H. Clements, the influential Chairman of the State Republican Executive Committee for Tennessee, to persuade Republicans in the legislature to vote unanimously for ratification. Without his endorsement the NWP could not guarantee Republican support.

All this interference from outside had little meaning in Tennessee where all sides of the suffrage debate had deployed their activists and where the most significant action now occurred. Support from the national parties alone would not achieve the suffragists' goal; state politicians had to approve the amendment. Sue White complained as late as 10

August that the Democrats in the legislature had still not organized in support of ratification.³ Further, Tennesseans disliked outsiders telling them what to do. The antisuffrage *Chattanooga Times* saw the National Democratic Party as coercing Tennessee while antisuffrage women were trying to preserve the country's "peace, order, and social integrity."⁴ Similarly, Republicans wanted to destroy Tennessee's constitution and take power from the Democrats. Hoping to shock politicians into voting against ratification, the *Chattanooga Times* threatened to withdraw its support from Democratic candidates who ratified.⁵

Apart from persuading outsiders to influence the outcome, therefore, organizers on both sides of the debate enlisted the support of powerful men within the state. These men helped not only by influencing their friends but also by ascertaining legislators' true opinions. Often legislators who refused to express publicly their opinion to a suffrage organizer privately opposed ratification. Different organizations, however, adopted different methods of enlisting support. NWP organizers contacted most legislators at home because they only arrived in Nashville the weekend before the special session. Sometimes they offered practical help to legislators who supported their cause. For instance, Anita Pollitzer provided Senator Erastus Eugene Patten with a stenographer so that he could write letters and send telegrams to other members. The SWRL concentrated on supplying antisuffrage literature to legislators rather than sending women to lobby them in person. The NAWSA used local women, who lived within a legislator's constituency, to lobby members, which exploited legislators' needs for local support.⁶

NWP organizers also solicited support from other women's groups. Pollitzer persuaded Jane Denney, the Chairman of the Knox County Women's Democratic Committee, to lobby the Democrats. She also asked Elizabeth Crozier French to lobby newspaper editors and other powerful men. Harriet Taylor Upton of the Republican National Committee arrived in Tennessee to lobby Republican members.⁷ Although women of differing political views cooperated in Tennessee and used similar tactics, suffragists remained divided; the NAWSA and the NWP mounted completely separate campaigns.

Not all campaigners were connected to a specific suffrage or antisuffrage organization. Some men arrived in Nashville to agitate against the amendment, but nobody knew who had sent them. The press described these unorganized opponents from the East, who apparently had unlimited funds, as "sinister influences."⁸ The identities of Thomas A. Keith and C. F. Taylor from New York, Martin McCreol from Chicago, and J. H. Eichelberger from Pennsylvania did not all remain a mystery. It transpired that the latter worked for the Constitutional League. Keith claimed to be a reporter, but when Parley Christensen accused him in the press of representing corporate interests, Keith left town.⁹

Some suffrage supporters considered the outcome a foregone conclusion because both national parties supported ratification. The political situation in Tennessee, however, was not conducive to united action. Once Tennessee women had won presidential suffrage, they had joined the existing political factions. Politicians, therefore, suspected their motives. For instance, Governor Roberts refused to work with the ratification

committee appointed by the NAWSA state auxiliary because some of the women supported his political opponents. He, therefore, appointed his own ratification committee who worked to reelect him while they worked for ratification. The NWP remained independent of the factions by representing itself as a single issue group that could ignore local divisions. In contrast, Catt knew that suffragists needed Roberts's help; therefore, she mediated between Roberts and the Tennessee women. She insisted that the NAWSA was not concerned with state politics; it wanted only to secure ratification of the federal amendment. Although sympathetic to Roberts's need for a committee that he could trust, Catt recognized that the committee had to represent both of the Democratic factions and the Republican Party to be effective. Roberts believed that the best argument for enfranchising women was that they would reelect Democrats, and he would lose the force of that argument if he accepted help from Republican women. Eventually, Catt persuaded him to allow a Republican to serve although Democrats dominated the committee. Charl Williams of the Democratic National Committee became chairman of the Ratification Committee. Catherine Kenney of the League of Women Voters, Mrs. James Beasley of the Women's Republican Ratification Committee and Tom Rye of the Men's Ratification Committee all continued to serve.¹⁰

Much of the debate was carried on in the press. Throughout the state, the major urban newspapers divided on the issue. In Nashville, the *Banner* strongly opposed ratification while the *Tennessean* supported suffrage. Similarly, the *Chattanooga Times* and the *Chattanooga News* took opposing views. In Knoxville, both the Republican *Knoxville Journal and Tribune* and its Democratic opponent, the *Knoxville Sentinel*, gave

guarded support for the measure. Both the *News Scimitar* and the *Commercial Appeal* in Memphis also seemed generally favorable.¹¹ In contrast to the gentlewomen of the antisuffrage cause, the press portrayed suffragists as well-trained lobbyists who used politics and “official influence” to secure supporters.¹²

In the newspapers, antisuffragists alleged that voting to ratify would violate a legislator’s oath of office, in which he had pledged to defend the state constitution, even if a clause in that constitution conflicted with the United States constitution. Thus, they forced Catt to argue that the oath supported both constitutions and in this case the United States constitution took precedence. She also had to devote time to obtaining legal opinions to buttress her contention. Similarly, Pollitzer sent copies of James Fowler’s legal opinion on the legality of the special session, not only to the newspapers but also to each legislator. His opinion reminded legislators who believed that they had no legal right to ratify that they would break their oath whether they voted for or against the amendment. Thus, he advised any member who believed that he had no right to act to abstain. Antisuffragists eventually argued that legal opinions alone were insufficient to ensure that the legislature had a right to ratify the amendment. They demanded a United States Supreme Court decision to confirm its legality.¹³

The SWRL took out full page newspaper advertisements arguing that most people did not want women’s enfranchisement and that it was not inevitable. Some advertisements argued that the state constitution was more important than political parties and vigorously attacked the suffragists’ card index system. Other advertisements attacked Catt personally and yet more censured the *Woman’s Bible*. Catt had to deny having

contributed to the *Woman's Bible* because its appearance at the Hermitage Hotel lost twenty-six votes in the legislature. Even her denials brought her criticism from antisuffragists who argued that she should simply condemn its contents and avoid criticizing Stanton. Catt must have found this attack especially galling because she had never supported the *Woman's Bible*; in fact, she had aggressively repudiated it at the 1896 NAWSA convention. Antisuffragists also attacked Catt in their letters to the press. For instance, Nina Pinckard quoted from a speech Catt had made three years earlier and misinterpreted it to accuse her of favoring miscegenation. Although Catt denied the allegation, the press implied that she was hiding her true opinions until she won the campaign.¹⁴ The antisuffrage press also resorted to personal attacks on Catt. As early as 1 August, the *Chattanooga Times* carried an editorial that maintained that it would be a "catastrophe" if Tennessee ratified the amendment, but that if the Catt were removed from the word, the problem would disappear.¹⁵

In its editorials, the *Chattanooga Times* continually denied that suffrage was the issue because Tennessee women could already vote in presidential elections. It opposed ratification because the best men from both parties had established the 1870 constitution. These men had included the clause requiring an election before ratifying a federal amendment to avoid hurrying an amendment through the Assembly as had happened earlier when the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments had passed. The present legislature, therefore, had a legal and moral obligation to hold an election before considering an amendment. Further, a federal amendment would force other southern states to accept woman suffrage against their will risking possible race problems.

Editorials also claimed that Catt wanted the North and West to unite in opposing the South and that Christensen's presence showed that communists and anarchists favored suffrage. Finally, to detract from the prohibition issue that may have aided woman suffrage in Tennessee, the *Chattanooga Times* argued that although the Prohibition Party supported women's enfranchisement, that issue took second place to prohibition. Catt retaliated that all antirratificationists were antisuffragists and were using concerns for the state constitution to conceal their opposition to woman suffrage.¹⁶ Certainly, she was correct in her assumptions as far as the *Chattanooga Times* was concerned; it had opposed presidential suffrage because it "violat[ed the] principle of local self-government."¹⁷

In contrast to the vitriol the press poured over Catt, it portrayed antisuffragists as gentlewomen fighting powerful forces alone. They had no support from the President, presidential candidates, the governor, or the United States senators; unlike the suffragists, they did not have unlimited funds, or a card index, and they would not enter politics and lobby.¹⁸ Antisuffragists did not entirely escape criticism, however. The *Knoxville Journal* criticized Rowe for telling Tennessee women how to be honorable.¹⁹

Little of the debate considered the justice or desirability of woman suffrage. Instead, it centered on the state constitution, the unfairness of federal amendments, and the political gains available to the party that enfranchised women. The arguments about the constitution were, in the end, a screen to oppose ratification. Almost everyone who used the constitutional argument opposed any method of enfranchising women. The suffrage press argued that if the Assembly acted unconstitutionally, the courts would

overrule its action, so concern for the state constitution was only a ploy to hide antirratificationists' "real objections."²⁰ Moreover, opponents of woman suffrage who suggested that the matter could wait until January for a decision would still oppose it then.²¹ Lea maintained that a "political ring" opposed to the governor had pushed aside the antisuffragists and those concerned with the constitution. It had brought out the "Prince of Lobbyists" who represented Bourbon leaders concerned with their political futures who were in politics for money not for their party.²² Thus, even suffrage supporters denied that woman suffrage was the issue. For instance, Ben Hooper told a Republican caucus it would harm the party and the nation if Republicans voted against the amendment. He failed, however, to persuade the Republicans as a group to vote for ratification.²³

Allegations flew from all sides, but both camps apparently overcame their scruples and acted shamefully. Antisuffragists sent telegrams to legislators who supported the amendment, requesting them to return home for fake emergencies so that they would not be present for the vote. They also intercepted a telegram sent by Harriet Taylor Upton, which they used as evidence that suffragists would use their card indexes to publicize which presidential candidate had most steadfastly supported women's enfranchisement. Antisuffragists argued that the only defense against such blackmail was to elect moral men. Besides these unscrupulous activities, they also resorted to humor; they teased their opponents by tricking them into believing that Senator Frank B. Brandegee of Connecticut, a long-term opponent of women's enfranchisement, was in Nashville. Intercepting telegrams was not a sport enjoyed only by antisuffragists. One

suffragist broke a window so that she could overhear an opponent's telephone call.

Similarly, White and Pollitzer were asked to leave the eighth floor of the Hermitage Hotel when they were caught spying on an antisuffrage meeting.²⁴

On 25 July, NAWSA announced that a majority of legislators had pledged themselves to ratify the amendment. Possibly, Catt intended her announcement as a show of confidence to bring additional votes. If so, her ploy left her open to attack.

Antisuffragists argued that if a majority wanted women to vote then Catt had no need to ask Cox for help. The NWP also disagreed with Catt's announcement because its leaders believed that legislators would lose interest if they thought the issue had been decided.²⁵

The state's powerful men often left their positions unclear. For instance, E. B. Stahlman's newspaper the *Nashville Banner* opposed ratification of the amendment yet he subsequently donated one hundred dollars to the NAWSA lawsuit defending ratification. Lea, whose newspaper continued to support the amendment, initially helped the suffragists but ceased when he found that he had a limited ability to influence legislators' votes. Although he blamed the Manufacturers Association for his limitation, he had not supported Roberts's nomination. Thus, his recalcitrance may have come from his political differences with Roberts. Despite its support, the *Nashville Tennessean* did not always help the suffragists correctly identify their allies. For instance, it reported that Senator John K. Shields no longer supported Roberts, and it inaccurately deduced that the Shelby County delegation would, therefore, not vote to ratify the amendment.²⁶

One defection from the suffrage camp caused particular controversy. Seth Walker, the Speaker of the House, had promised to introduce the amendment to his chamber.

Betty Gram, a NWP organizer, had been active in his district, and on 9 August, she approached him to review the pledges with her.²⁷ When he told her that he would not support the issue and would instead lead the opposition forces, Gram publicly berated him, calling him a “crook” and accusing him of being dominated by either the governor or the Louisville and Nashville Railroad.²⁸ Most newspapers reported the incident between Gram and Walker, which forced him to deny to the House that the railroad company had influenced his vote. The *Chattanooga Times* praised him for ignoring his personal opinion on suffrage in favor of honoring the state constitution.²⁹

Although he only changed his vote after “mysterious” men arrived in Nashville on 7 August, Walker’s defection seems premeditated.³⁰ While he had thought it politically prudent to support woman suffrage, his own political interests dictated that he should not support ratification. Although he believed that demand for ratification came from the cities, he argued that he represented a rural area where public opinion opposed it. Despite his own reservations, he did not criticize the governor who had to fulfill his obligations to the national party. Walker had not, however, been a reliable suffrage ally. He had never supported the issue until the 1919 House debate on presidential suffrage when he suddenly became convinced that women should vote because they paid taxes. Further, when Gram had initially solicited his support for ratification, Walker had needed time to consider whether the Assembly could legally act. Although Walker’s new job as counsel for the Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis Railroad makes it difficult to distinguish between political interests and bribery, other representatives with railroad appointments

voted for the amendment. While Walker's true beliefs remain a mystery, he gave the final vote for the amendment and wrote his way into suffrage mythology.

Despite Gram's anger, the NWP leadership said that it would not censure Tennessee's legislators if they failed to ratify but rather the national political parties who, it claimed, did not want women voting in the 1920 presidential election. When the NWP leaders feared that they had lost their majority, they blamed Cox and Harding for not putting sufficient pressure on legislators.³¹ White argued that Cox had to overcome the influence of Roberts's "chief supporters" who opposed ratification.³² Walker especially was close to Roberts and could influence him against ratification. The NWP's rhetoric allowed it to continue with its campaign against "the Party in power" if the states did not ratify the amendment before the election.³³ Despite this rhetoric, however, the national parties favored ratification more than did the states.

When the special session convened on 9 August, the capitol was seething with an estimated 1000 lobbyists of whom 200 women and 50 men sought ratification of the amendment. Catt and Upton were the only absentees. They remained at the Hermitage Hotel upholding their belief that Tennesseans had to decide the issue. Provocatively dressed suffragists and antisuffragists cornered undecided legislators in attempts to earn their support. The strongly biased *Chattanooga Times* suggested that suffragists had the advantage because they had experience in dressing to influence legislators.³⁴

On August 10, Speaker Andrew L. Todd introduced the amendment to the Senate, and the Shelby delegation introduced it to House. Governor Roberts sent a message to the Assembly asking its members to ratify because both national parties had woman suffrage

planks on their platforms and advising them that the clause in the state constitution did not prevent ratification. Both chambers held it over for a day before referring it to committee.³⁵

The following day, Roberts again arrived at the capitol to confer with members. Under pressure from Anne Dudley, he submitted a resolution to the Assembly calling for ratification. The Senate Committee on Constitutional Amendments and the House Committee on Constitutional Conventions and Amendments met in joint session on 12 August and heard arguments from both suffrage and antisuffrage speakers including Rowe and Stahlman against ratification, and Williams and McKellar for ratification. These speeches concentrated on the legality or otherwise of Tennessee's ratification rather than the issue of women's enfranchisement. Local newspapers divided on their assessment of the meeting depending on which side they supported. Suffrage newspaper, the *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, believed that members were influenced by the level of support for an issue rather than the arguments, and therefore, the suffragists would win because they had the most support. In contrast, the *Chattanooga Times* saw the antisuffragists as dominating the hearing. Will Hays, the National Republican chairman, telegraphed the Assembly saying that many important questions, which were causing unrest, faced the country, and enfranchising women would settle one of those questions. Thus, it was not a party question but a matter of national importance. Suffragists already feared that opposition legislators would leave the state to break the quorum, but the Speakers of both chambers denied that would happen because such a ploy had failed in

the past when the Speaker had simply answered men as present but not voting. The state Supreme Court had upheld the legality of such a manoeuvre.³⁶

On Friday 13 August, all interested parties gathered at the capitol. In the Senate, a suffragist sat beside each pro-suffrage senator throughout the debate. The Committee on Constitutional Amendments issued a majority report to the Senate recommending that it could legally ratify the amendment. Moreover, both party platforms had suffrage planks that assumed its eventual passage. Senators James Rice and Walter Cameron both disagreed and issued a minority report arguing that the Assembly had no right to act.³⁷

During the subsequent debate, Herschel Candler gave three reasons for opposing ratification of the amendment. First, it would allow blacks to vote. Second, Catt advocated miscegenation.³⁸ Third, Candler did not like the “class of women” lobbying for the amendment.³⁹ The latter argument probably represented his true reason for opposing the amendment because he had voted for presidential suffrage in 1917 but had opposed the further enfranchisement of women once the NWP pickets had descended on the White House. He earned the hisses of suffragists in the gallery when he attacked Catt by saying that her husband was probably called “Tom.”⁴⁰ Their hisses allegedly intimidated the other senators, and subsequent speakers criticized his language.⁴¹

In contrast to the speeches made in committee, the senators’ speeches related more to “petticoat government” than to the constitution.⁴² One exception, William Preston Monroe, used an unusual states’ rights argument to support his vote for ratification. Since Vermont and Connecticut had appealed to states’ rights arguments to discourage Tennessee from ratifying, Monroe argued that they had forced the Fourteenth

and Fifteenth amendments on Tennessee so he would happily force woman suffrage on them. On a day of record rainfall, and in Roberts' presence, the Senate ratified the amendment by twenty-five votes to four. The suffragists present rejoiced so wildly when they received the seventeenth vote giving them a majority that proceedings were halted. Two senators, who believed that they had no right to act, correctly abstained rather than voting against the amendment.⁴³

The result angered the antisuffrage press, which attacked the Democratic party for being centralized and paternalistic and destroying states' rights. Editorials accused State Attorney General Thompson of destroying the republic because if he could make changes to the state constitution by his decisions then communists could also do so. Additionally, the press criticized Roberts's opening statement that ratification would be legal as misrepresenting the constitutional situation. It argued that Tennessee differed from Ohio because the latter demanded a referendum, which added something to the ratification process, whereas, Tennessee only required an election. It alleged that state patronage had been used as a weapon to influence senators to change their votes. Further, the press argued that the new female voters would vote against the Democratic Party to punish it for opposing their enfranchisement. The Democrats would not, therefore, benefit by enfranchising women.⁴⁴ Moreover, the federal government had only interfered in the franchise when it had inflicted the Fourteenth Amendment during a "revolution."⁴⁵ Woman suffrage differed from that occasion because it involved no war only an "academic" discussion arising from progressive politicians who were ignoring the constitution.⁴⁶

Although Rowe maintained that the Senate's vote did not alarm her because other state Senates had ratified without their Houses doing so, Tennessee's House vote now became crucial. Moreover, many legislators left Nashville for the weekend making them less easy to contact, but both sides of the debate continued to press their supporters to stay constant. The size of the Senate majority had taken everyone by surprise, but antisuffragists received some hope from events outside Tennessee. North Carolina legislators, who were also meeting to consider the amendment, had already telegraphed Tennessee asking representatives not to ratify. Now Harding, in a letter to Judge G. N. Tillman of the Tennessee Constitutional League, refused to comment on the clause in Tennessee's constitution because he had not seen it. Nevertheless, he did not want to violate states' rights even though he considered the amendment important.⁴⁷ The *Knoxville Sentinel* condemned his comments as showing that he was uncertain about suffrage because every other "informed" person in the country knew about Tennessee's constitutional limitation.⁴⁸

Over that weekend "formidable numbers" of lobbyists arrived representing a "mysterious influence."⁴⁹ The NWP alleged that the railroads opposed ratification, but Newell Sanders, the only railroad representative present, was a suffragist. After spending most of the 15 August in conference, Walker declared that the House would reject the proposition; White thought the situation still undecided, and male suffrage leaders thought that they would win but that the result would be close. Suffragists were not idle; they telegraphed members at home to ensure that they returned to Nashville in time for Monday's session.⁵⁰

Suffragists won an early victory in the House by successfully tabling a motion to delay consideration until mass meetings could be held to determine public opinion. They received a second boost when the House decided that ratification required only a plurality since it was a federal matter and as such was not governed by the state constitution. Suffragists had expected to need a constitutional majority, which mandated a majority of representatives, which would mean fifty votes.

Antisuffragists were not disheartened, however, because five representatives from Davidson County had converted to their cause. They argued that the representatives had changed their votes because they had discovered that their constituents opposed woman suffrage when they had visited their districts that weekend. The Davidson delegation was, however, near to its constituents anyway and was more concerned with local legislation than the amendment. Legislators may, therefore, have withdrawn their support for woman suffrage because of differences with the governor over unrelated issues. Antisuffragists received further encouragement when their supporters almost succeeded in killing the amendment in committee until James Dale McMurray changed his vote to avoid a draw. Thus, it was finally voted out of committee by ten votes to eight.⁵¹ Still uncertain which way the House vote would go, both suffragists and antisuffragists worked until midnight to keep their supporters in line.⁵²

On 17 August, the House began the day by voting to clear the floor of all outsiders except reporters. As the antisuffragists watched from the galleries, representatives debated the proposition and gave a variety of reasons for their opinions. Creed Fulton Boyer, for instance, trusted his daughter and would be happy to ratify if his

constituents supported the measure, but they did not. Percy Sharpe thought every man should vote with his conscience, but as he came from South Carolina, he was voting for those people who had “no voice” in the proceedings.⁵³ Joseph Fry Odle thought women should vote because they paid taxes, and George A. Canale thought it morally right to enfranchise women after their wartime contribution. Three letters were read to the House from United States Assistant Attorney General W. L. Frierson, Harding, and Wilson. Frierson did not tell them how to vote, merely that it was constitutional to do so. Harding said that they should not violate their oaths, and Wilson urged them to ratify. Although both Walker and Thomas K. Riddick claimed to have a majority of pledges, neither side was certain of victory because the House voted to adjourn by fifty-three votes to forty-four.⁵⁴

That evening, everyone tried to secure their position. The NAWSA leadership charged that antisuffragists served alcohol to legislators at the Hermitage Hotel, which resulted in much drunkenness and fighting. When suffragists asked for prohibition to be enforced, they were told that alcohol and legislation were always connected in Tennessee. Despite these criticisms, male suffrage supporters spent eighteen hundred dollars on entertaining which suggests that they too served whiskey. About midnight suffragists decided that they had done all that they could. Antisuffragists, however, continued telephoning legislators at half-hour intervals throughout the night.⁵⁵

On Wednesday 18 August, suffragists dressed in yellow, carrying banners, waving flags, and rattling noisemakers, filled the gallery and hung eight banners from its railings. Since the House did not clear the floor, suffragists and their supporters also

crowded the floor to keep track of legislators. As suffragists surveyed the scene, they saw that only three representatives were absent--two Republicans and one Democrat. One Republican, Charles Wesley Brooks, had also been absent for the vote on presidential suffrage, and the other two men had split their vote.⁵⁶ Absentees should not, therefore, present extra difficulties for either side because each side had lost a vote.

After some debate, Walker felt that the antisuffragists had a majority and left the speaker's chair to William Overton. From a position on the floor, Walker made his dramatic pronouncement then moved to table the motion, which required two roll calls because the noise interfered with the count. When the vote finally became clear, the result was a tie. Tempers were frayed; a fight almost broke out when Walker demanded that Riddick sit. The latter refused until the former did so, and other representatives crowded round. Bloodshed was averted, however, and both sides apparently thought that they could win. Although the motion to table failed, the antisuffragists were optimistic because they could prevent passage of the amendment by another tie vote. The suffragists needed a plurality to win, but the NWP women wandered the halls of the Capitol distributing sandwiches and flowers to legislators to induce them to remain for the vote.⁵⁷

As the vote to concur with the Senate's ratification of the amendment began, legislators voted as predicted by the earlier motion to table. When Republican Harry Burn voted "aye" on the vote to concur, despite having voted to table, the antisuffragists did not panic because Banks Turner, who had voted not to table, had promised them that he would abstain, and he did so. At the end of the roll call, however, Turner cast his vote for the amendment making the vote forty-nine to forty-seven. The chamber was in uproar as

suffragists celebrated their victory by waving their flags. In the chaos, Walker changed his vote because only a person on the winning side could move to reconsider. In doing so, he made the vote fifty to forty-six, which gave the suffragists a constitutional majority and deprived the antisuffragists of a possible challenge. Somewhat belatedly, the floor was cleared after the vote.⁵⁸

Allegations of misconduct soon began to fly. The antisuffragists accused Burn of accepting a bribe from Joseph Hanover since the two men had left the chamber together after the motion to table and entered an adjoining office. Roberts's secretary, Major Daughtry, aided by Luke Lea, had apparently climbed through a window and along a parapet to meet Burn and Hanover secretly. During that meeting, Hanover had offered Burn ten thousand dollars or anything he wanted for his vote in the presence of Ennis Murray, the agent for the Federal Loan Bank, Margaret Bruce, a clerk in the printing commissioner's office, suffragist Katherine Warner, and Judge C. C. Wallace. Margaret Bruce initially made the charges, but she left Nashville in a hurry after receiving a telegram calling her to Atlanta for a fake family emergency. Wallace provided an affidavit that Burn had been bribed, but Warner denied the allegation.⁵⁹

Burn initially claimed to have changed his vote because he had received a letter from his mother urging him to "help Mrs. Catt put 'rat' in ratification."⁶⁰ Some doubted that Burn had received any such communication. Anne Pleasant even visited Burn's mother asking her to deny the letter; however, Mrs. J. L. Burn authenticated it. The antisuffrage press, nonetheless, questioned Burns's affection for his mother because he had received her letter before he had voted to table the motion, but he did not accede to

her request until after he had talked to Hanover. Further, it alleged that Burn had signed a pledge against ratification and had violated his oath of office by succumbing to the suffragists who had mounted the strongest lobby ever seen.⁶¹

Locally, neither antisuffragists nor suffragists believed that Burn had taken a bribe. Burn and Senator Candler both represented McMinn County, and although Candler had voted against ratification, he publicly supported Burn. Candler argued that Burn, a director of Niota textile mills, president of Niota hosiery mills, a vice-president of Niota Bank, president of Niota Light and Water, and a joint owner of a farm, was a rich man and would not, therefore, be influenced by bribery. This argument may not bear scrutiny since McMinn County had a population of only 25,000. Niota itself was a small town; thus, one would not need extraordinary wealth to be a rich man there. Nationally, however, antisuffragists accused the suffragists of offering a ten-thousand dollar bribe to any legislator who would change his vote.⁶² All together it seems unlikely that suffrage supporters offered or that Burn accepted a bribe. Since he and Daughtry were old friends, Daughtry would have been a legitimate person to persuade him to change his vote. Further, Hanover himself offered the best defense of his position; he would hardly bribe a man in front of so many witnesses.⁶³

The Democratic antisuffrage press also used the opportunity to attack the Republican Party. Early in the session, Republicans had caucused to try to vote together in a bloc but that effort had failed. Now, the Democratic press alleged that House Republicans had agreed to vote for ratification by fifteen votes to thirteen so that they could claim that Republicans had enfranchised women. Burn's unexpected change left his

colleagues with no opportunity to arrange for another of their number to vote "nay." In fact, there were only twenty-six Republican members in the House, and two of those were absent. Another account says that Republicans agreed that fourteen would vote for and twelve would vote against the amendment.⁶⁴ Republicans probably had such an agreement, but any one of them could have changed his vote immediately to counteract Burn's alteration. If Burn had voted "nay," however, the Republican vote would have been thirteen to eleven in favor. Burn may, therefore, have changed his vote to ensure that fourteen Republicans voted to concur. Such an explanation would clarify why another Republican did not change his vote to balance Burn's.

Although Burn's vote has become part of suffrage myth, he had continually wavered in his commitment to ratification. In July, he had privately promised to vote for the amendment, but by 7 August, he had changed his mind, and suffragists asked those who had influence with him to persuade him to reconsider. He was still uncertain two days before the vote, but he told Pollitzer that he would vote for ratification if his vote were needed. It was, and he did. The criticism heaped on him drove him to explain his reasons for his vote to the House, and he offered five reasons for his decision. He believed in it, he had a moral and legal right to ratify, his mother believed in it, he had the power to enfranchise women, and he wanted Republicans to reap the benefits. The first seems true; apparently he wavered because he was unsure of his constituents' support. His second reason merely shows that he accepted the illegality of the constitutional limitation. Although much has been made of his third explanation, that was only one of his reasons. Milton had asked for Burn's constituents to telegraph him with pleas to

support the amendment. His mother's letter may have been one of these and doubtless carried the most weight, but if his other constituents had opposed the measure one suspects that he would have risked his mother's displeasure. Burn's fourth reason really follows from the first, and the fifth suggests that he may well have voted as the fourteenth Republican. Historians have made much of Burn's change of heart, but he did not dramatically change his mind at the last moment as some accounts indicated.⁶⁵ Burn's vote represented the culmination of reasoned consideration based on his personal beliefs and his perception of his own political advantage.

A county grand jury investigated the allegations of bribery. It focused its attention on Eichelberger, of the American Constitutional League, because of the amount of money he allegedly spent on advertising, an assertion he denied. Eichelberger testified to the grand jury that Representative Sidney Carr had told him that four or five representatives were prepared to sell their votes to the highest bidder. Although Eichelberger claimed that he had wanted to inform the police and arrange to entrap the corrupt politicians, Carr denied having even met him. When they met subsequently, they almost came to blows because Eichelberger's claims so infuriated Carr.⁶⁶

Nonetheless, Eichelberger called for the grand jury to investigate Catt. Similarly, Pearson questioned how Catt had spent eighty thousand dollars. In fact, Pearson failed to distinguish between the NAWSA and the NWP. Paul claimed to have spent that sum in winning the final state, but that included money spent on the failed campaign in Delaware. Tennessee's ratification campaign had cost the NWP a reported ten thousand dollars. Catt, who had not realized that suffragists were under investigation, wished that

she had remained in Tennessee to give evidence to the grand jury since the antisuffragists now accused her of leaving the state hurriedly to avoid examination. Unfortunately for historians, NAWSA expenses are far from clear because they were scattered among so many groups. It did, however, make some large payments for travel expenses. For instance, it paid \$615 for a special train to take Harry Burn and T. A. Dodson to Chattanooga so that the latter could return to his sick child because remaining for the vote had caused him to miss a scheduled train. Burn, on the other hand wanted to leave Nashville quickly because of the outcry over his changed vote. Similarly, the NAWSA paid \$375 for a train to take Charles Wesley Brooks home to visit his sick wife and return him to Nashville in time for the vote. Unfortunately, he did not return for the vote. They paid a further \$532.85 to bring J. Frank Griffin from California and \$400 for a train for Albert Williams of the Men's Ratification Committee. Anne Dudley also presented gift knives to suffrage supporters, which cost the NAWSA almost \$400. Despite such large expenses, the grand jury found no evidence of wrongdoing by either side.⁶⁷

Nationally, people assumed that the matter was over; Wilson and vice-presidential candidate Franklin D. Roosevelt each sent messages congratulating Tennessee on its vote. Antisuffragists had not given up, however. Walker had to bring up the motion to reconsider by Friday 20 August. If he failed to do so, suffrage supporters could bring it up the following day and would almost certainly vote to table it. On Friday, Walker claimed that he expected three suffrage supporters to vote with him on a vote to adjourn until Monday. His claim seems unlikely, however, because if he had managed to persuade men to change their decision, he could have brought up the motion to reconsider right then.

When suffrage supporters successfully prevented their opponents from adjourning until Monday, they seemed certain to win the motion to reconsider.⁶⁸

Faced with almost certain defeat, thirty antisuffrage representatives left the state to break the quorum. Lea criticized them for using the tactic because he said that previously a minority had broken the quorum only when the Speaker had denied their rights. This time, however, the Speaker supported the minority view so they had no cause to complain about unfair rulings. Moreover, Lea considered it very dangerous to stability for a minority of representatives to challenge majority rule simply because they disagreed with a decision. Besides, resorting to such methods as breaking the quorum showed that the antirratificationists had lost in the House.⁶⁹

Nonetheless, when the House met on Saturday, it was seven men short of a quorum. Walker made a show of sending the Sergeant at Arms to search for the missing men although he knew that they had left the state. When proceedings resumed, Riddick declared that a federal matter did not require a quorum. The House could, therefore, work on parliamentary law rather than the state constitution. Moreover, as the amendment had only needed a plurality to ratify it only needed a plurality to reconsider. Walker ruled him out of order, but the House failed to sustain him. Odle, therefore, took the chair in Walker's place, and suffrage supporters brought forward the motion to reconsider, which they promptly defeated.⁷⁰

The Tennessee Constitutional League issued an injunction restraining Governor Roberts from certifying the amendment as they had always promised to do. Its president, Joseph Higgins, also telegraphed to the governors of all the states that had not yet ratified

explaining that Tennessee had not ratified the amendment and asking that no state should ratify believing that the matter was settled. On 24 August, Roberts secretly took out a writ to have the injunction set aside without giving the Tennessee Constitutional League an opportunity to file a brief, and then he quickly certified ratification. This action led the antisuffrage press to compare him to bootleggers and bolsheviks. Nationally, the courts denied the American Constitutional League an injunction to prevent Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby from signing the amendment. Thus, on 26 August 1920, he duly signed the Nineteenth Amendment. His action effectively brought agitation on the subject of women's enfranchisement to an end, although the American Constitutional League continued its challenges through the federal courts until it lost the final decision in February 1922.⁷¹

Tennessee's legislators persisted with the matter, however. The missing representatives returned from Alabama, and despite efforts by suffrage supporters such as Burn who climbed out of a window and ran down the street to evade the Sergeant at Arms, they expunged the record of ratification. Catt, disturbed that they succeeded in doing so, believed that if suffragists had been present the action would not have occurred. She objected also to Pinckard's general allegation that representatives took bribes since such accusations reflected on all the men who voted to ratify. Despite these concerns, she herself specifically alleged that James H. Gilbreth took a bribe from the antisuffragists. The rest of the country thought that the representatives were making themselves look foolish and that Walker should have brought the motion to reconsider before the House allowing it to vote and end the matter cleanly.⁷²

Despite allegations of fraud and bribery from both sides during the campaign, the grand jury found no evidence that either side had acted illegally. Yet, both sides continually referred to undue pressure by undefined outside interests. Although historians generally believe that liquor interests opposed women's enfranchisement, they have not examined the extent of corporate pressure on the Tennessee campaign.⁷³ The liquor and railroad industries' ability to influence Tennessee's politics and to affect unduly the outcome of the ratification campaign, therefore, merits closer investigation.

ENDNOTES

1.Christensen's association with the NWP did not remain a secret, but it never became a significant issue. After ratification, the NWP acknowledged Christensen's assistance. Alice Paul, [Washington, D.C.], to Sue White, 4 August 1920, NWP Papers; *Suffragist*, September 1920, 200.

2.*Suffragist*, August 1920, 164; Irwin, *Woman's Party*, 151, 453; Taylor, *Woman Suffrage in Tennessee*, 110; Alice Paul, [Washington, D.C.], to Sue White, 5 August 1920, NWP Papers; Alice Paul, [Washington, D.C.], to Abby Scott Baker, 29 June 1920, NWP Papers; Jablonsky, *Home, Heaven, and Mother Party*, 99; *Nashville Tennessean*, 5 August 1920, 1; *Suffragist*, September 1920, 199; *Chattanooga Times*, 6 August 1920, 4; *Knoxville Sentinel*, 10 August 1920, 22; *Knoxville Sentinel*, 12 August 1920, 1; Unnamed, to James O'Mara, New York, 30 July 1920, NWP Papers; Anita Pollitzer, Knoxville, to Alice Paul, [Washington, D.C.], 29 July 1920, NWP Papers.

3.Sue White, Nashville, to Abby Scott Baker, Columbus, 10 August 1920, NWP Papers.

4.*Chattanooga Times*, 2 August 1920, 4.

5.*Chattanooga Times*, 4 August 1920, 4; *Chattanooga Times*, 2 August 1920, 4.

6.Sims, "Powers that Pray," 211; Anita Pollitzer, Knoxville, to Alice Paul, [Washington, D.C.], 29 July 1920, NWP Papers; *Knoxville Journal and Tribune*, 8 August 1; Catt and Shuler, *Woman Suffrage and Politics*, 437.

7.Anita Pollitzer, Knoxville, to Alice Paul, [Washington, D.C.], 29 July 1920, NWP Papers; Catt and Shuler, *Woman Suffrage and Politics*, 437; Taylor, *Woman Suffrage in Tennessee*, 62; *Suffragist*, September 1920, 202.

8.*Nashville Tennessean*, 7 August 1920, 8.

9.*Knoxville Journal and Tribune*, 10 August 1920, 2; Carrie Chapman Catt to Mr. Hays, 9 August 1920, Catt Papers; Irwin, *Woman's Party*, 456.

10.Catt and Shuler, *Woman Suffrage and Politics*, 430-4; *Knoxville Journal and Tribune*, 1 August 1920, 5; Sue White, to Senator Stockard, 30 June 1920, NWP Papers; Governor Roberts, to Carrie Chapman Catt, New York, 10 July 1920, Albert Houston Roberts

(1868-1946) Papers, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville; *Nashville Banner*, 9 August 1920, 1; *Chattanooga Times*, 25 August 1920, 1; *Chattanooga Times*, 10 August 1920, 1; *Chattanooga Times*, 1 August 1920, 14.

11. Marirose Arendale, "Tennessee and Woman's Rights," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* XXXIX (spring 1980): 69; *Knoxville Journal and Tribune*, 19 August 1920, 7; *Knoxville Sentinel*, 7 August 1920, 8; *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, 8 August 1920, 13; *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, 10 August 1920, 1; *Memphis News Scimitar*, 14 August 1920, 2.

12. *Chattanooga Times*, 21 August 1920, 1.

13. Catt and Shuler, *Woman Suffrage and Politics*, 434-436; Anita Pollitzer, Knoxville, to Alice Paul, [Washington, D.C.], 29 July 1920, NWP Papers; *Knoxville Journal and Tribune*, 29 July 1920, 12; *Chattanooga Times*, 13 August 1920, 4.

14. *Nashville Banner*, 12 August 1920, 19-20; *Chattanooga Times*, 15 August 1920, 18; *Nashville Banner*, 16 August 1920, 1; [Elizabeth Cady Stanton], *The Woman's Bible: Comments on the Old and New Testaments from Joshua to Revelation*, Part II (New York: European Publishing Company, 1898; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1972), 5, 215 (page citations are to the reprint edition); [Elizabeth Cady Stanton], *The Woman's Bible: Comments on Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy*, Part I (New York: European Publishing Company, 1895; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1972), 3 (page citations are to the reprint edition); *Nashville Banner*, 25 July 1920, 11.

15. *Chattanooga Times*, 1 August 1920, 18.

16. *Chattanooga Times*, 6 August 1920, 4; *Chattanooga Times*, 12 August 1920, 4; *Chattanooga Times*, 11 August 1920, 4; *Chattanooga Times* 4 August 1920, 4; *Chattanooga Times*, 10 August 1920, 4; *Chattanooga Times*, 23 August 1920, 4; *Chattanooga Times*, 5 August 1920, 7.

17. News Clipping, *Chattanooga Times*, 18 April n.d., Abby Crawford Milton Papers.

18. *Chattanooga Times*, 15 August 1920, 5.

19. *Knoxville Journal and Tribune*, 13 August 1920, 1.

20. *Nashville Tennessean*, 6 August 1920, 4.

21. *Nashville Tennessean*, 17 August, 1920, 4.
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Knoxville Journal and Tribune*, 10 August 1920, 1.
24. Bucy, "Thrill of History Making," 233; *Nashville Banner*, 26 August 1920, 15; *Chattanooga Times*, 26 August 1920, 4; *Knoxville Sentinel*, 27 August 1920, 13; *Knoxville Journal and Tribune*, 10 August 1920, 2; *Chattanooga Times*, 21 August 1920, 1.
25. *Chattanooga Times*, 6 August 1920, 7; Anita Pollitzer, Knoxville, to Alice Paul, [Washington, D.C.], 2 August 1920, NWP Papers.
26. Catherine Kenney, to Carrie Chapman Catt, 21 Jan 1921, Catt Papers; Luke Lea to Carrie Chapman Catt, 12 August 1920, Luke Lea Papers 1826-1993, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville; Sue White, Nashville, to Abby Scott Baker, Columbus, 18 August 1920, NWP Papers; *Nashville Tennessean*, 29 June 1920, 10.
27. Catt and Shuler, *Woman Suffrage and Politics*, 441.
28. Irwin, *Woman's Party*, 453, 455-6; *Knoxville Sentinel*, 10 August 1920, 1; *Chattanooga Times*, 11 August 1920, 1; *Knoxville Journal and Tribune*, 11 August 1920, 1; *Nashville Banner*, 11 August 1920, 15; *Knoxville Sentinel*, 12 August 1920, 5.
29. George B. Waters, to Seth M. Walker, Nashville, n.d., NWP Papers; *Chattanooga Times*, 11 August 1920, 1; Sue White, [Nashville], to Alice Paul, [Washington, D.C.], 16 August 1920, NWP Papers; Ilene, J. Cornwell, with research by Verla S. Hodges, *Biographical Directory of the Tennessee General Assembly Vol. III 1901-1931* (Nashville: Tennessee Historical Commission, 1988), 86; *Chattanooga Times*, 18 August 1920, 2; *Chattanooga Times* 12 August 1920, 4. News Clipping, "Tennessee Leads," 26 April 1919, Abby Crawford Milton Papers; Irwin, *Woman's Party*, 455; Emma Wold, to Sue White, 20 July 1920, NWP Papers; Bucy, "Thrill of History Making," 234.
30. *Knoxville Sentinel*, 16 August 1920, 1.
31. *Suffragist*, August 1920. 155; *Chattanooga Times*, 11 August 1920, 1.
32. *Nashville Banner*, 11 August 1920, 1.

33. *Knoxville Sentinel*, 11 August 1920, 4; Irwin, 74.
34. *Chattanooga Times*, 17 August 1920, 1; *Chattanooga Times*, 18 August 1920, 1; *Chattanooga Times*, 11 August 1920, 1; *Knoxville Journal and Tribune*, 10 August 1920, 1; *Chattanooga Times*, 10 August 1920, 1; *Nashville Banner*, 9 August 1920, 1.
35. *Knoxville Sentinel*, 10 August 1920, 1; *Nashville Banner*, 10 August 1920, 1; Irwin, *Woman's Party*, 457.
36. *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, 12 August 1920, 1, 3; *Chattanooga Times*, 13 August 1920, 1; *Knoxville Journal and Tribune*, 12 August 1920, 2; *Knoxville Sentinel*, 11 August 1920, 5; *Nashville Banner*, 13 August 1920, 10; *Knoxville Journal and Tribune*, 13 August 1920, 1, 2.
37. *Knoxville Sentinel*, 13 August 1920, 5; J. D. Green and Walker Totty, *House and Senate Journal of the Extraordinary Session of the Sixty-First General Assembly of the State of Tennessee which convened at Nashville, Monday, August 9, 1920* (Jackson, TN: McCowat-Mercer Printing Co., 1920), 292, 294.
38. *Knoxville Journal and Tribune*, 14 August 1920, 2.
39. *Ibid.*
40. News Clipping, *Knoxville Journal and Tribune*, 29 March 1919, Abby Crawford Milton Papers; *Nashville Tennessean*, 14 August 1920, 1; *Chattanooga Times*, 14 August 1920, 1.
41. *House and Senate Journal 1920*, 297, 92.
42. *Chattanooga Times*, 14 August 1920, 1.
43. *Knoxville Journal and Tribune*, 16 August 1920, 3; Irwin, *Woman's Party*, 457; *Chattanooga Times*, 27 August, 1920, 12; *Chattanooga Times*, 14 August 1920, 1; *House and Senate Journal 1920*, 297, 92; *Knoxville Journal and Tribune*, 14 August 1920, 1.
44. *Chattanooga Times*, 11 August 1920, 4; *Chattanooga Times*, 4 August 1920, 4; *Chattanooga Times*, 14 August 1920, 1, 4; *Chattanooga Times*, 15 August 1920, 18.
45. *Chattanooga Times*, 12 August 1920, 4.

46.Ibid.

47.*Nashville Banner*, 14 August 1920, 1; *Nashville Tennessean*, 14 August 1920, 6; *Chattanooga Times*, 12 August 1920, 1; *Chattanooga Times*, 13 August 1920, 1; *Nashville Banner*, 15 August 1920, 1.

48.*Knoxville Sentinel*, 13 August 1920, 8.

49.*Knoxville Sentinel*, 16 August 1920, 1.

50.*Chattanooga Times*, 18 August 1920, 4; *Chattanooga Times*, 16 August 1920, 1; *Knoxville Journal and Tribune*, 16 August 1920, 1.

51.For, Riddick, Hanover, Harris, Davis, Bratton, Simpson, Ellis, Odle, McMurray, Keaton. *House and Senate Journal*, 1920, 88; Against, Hall, Bond, Story, Turner, Wolfenbarger, Martin, Jackson, Weldon. *Knoxville Sentinel*, 17 August 1920, 1.

52.*Chattanooga Times*, 12 August 1920, 1; *Chattanooga Times*, 13 August 1920, 1; *Chattanooga Times*, 17 August 1920, 1; *Knoxville Sentinel*, 17 August 1920, 1; *Knoxville Sentinel*, 16 August 1920, 1.

53.*Knoxville Sentinel*, 17 August 1920, 1.

54.Mabel Reber, Nashville, to Florence Brewer Boeckel, Washington, D.C., 18 August 1920, NWP Papers; *Chattanooga Times*, 18 August 1920, 2; *Nashville Tennessean*, 18 August 1920, 1; *Knoxville Sentinel*, 17 August 1920, 1.

55.Catt and Shuler, *Woman Suffrage and Politics*, 442; Catherine Kenny, to Carrie Chapman Catt, 16 November 1920, Catt Papers; *Chattanooga Times*, 27 August 1920, 1.

56.Mabel Reber, Nashville, to Florence Brewer Boeckel, Washington, D.C., 18 August 1920, NWP Papers; *Chattanooga Times*, 19 August 1920, 1, 2; J. D. Green and Walker Totty, *House Journal of the Sixty-First General Assembly of the State of Tennessee which convened at Nashville, Monday, January 6, 1919* (Jackson, TN: McCowat-Mercer Printing Co., 1919), 920.

57.*Chattanooga Times*, 19 August 1920, 1; Mabel Reber, Nashville, to Florence Brewer Boeckel, Washington, D.C., 18 August 1920, NWP Papers; *Nashville Banner*, 18 August 1920, 1; *House Journal 1919*, 919; Linda G. Ford, *Iron-Jawed Angels: The Suffrage*

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58. *Nashville Banner*, 22 August 1920, 1; *Chattanooga Times*, 19 August 1920, 1, 2; *Knoxville Sentinel*, 18 August 1920, 8.

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73. McDonagh, "Significance of the Nineteenth Amendment", 79; Morgan, *Suffragists and Democrats*, 163-4; Buechler, *Women's Movements in the United States*, 182; Jablonsky, *Home, Heaven, and Mother Party*, 74; Camhi, *Women Against Women*, 104.

CHAPTER 6--TENNESSEE'S RAILROAD AND LIQUOR INDUSTRIES

During the campaign, suffragists alleged that “sinister antisuffrage influences” worked secretly to discourage members of the Assembly from voting to ratify the amendment.¹ The suffrage press said that the “most formidable lobby” tried to defeat the amendment.² At the time, suffragists did not identify their enemies, but in later writings, Catt maintained that the strong railroad, steel, and manufacturing lobbies worked with a “remnant of the old whiskey ring” to prevent ratification.³ In alleging that all the “briable” legislators voted against the amendment, she shows that she not only believed that these interests opposed suffrage but that they also bribed legislators to change their votes.⁴ The NWP claimed not to know the source of the opposition to ratification but blamed railroad rather than liquor interests for legislators changing their affiliation at the last minute, which it saw as indicative of undue influence. Paul’s conviction in making this allegation remains uncertain because she made it in a letter soliciting funds. Suffragists, however, found it effective public relations to portray themselves as weak women attacked by forces beyond their control. Nevertheless, men who opposed suffrage sometimes had associations with railroads; for instance, Clem Jones was a lobbyist for the Louisville and Nashville Railroad and Milton H. Smith its president.⁵

Antisuffragists also accused their opponents of associating with the railroads and the liquor industry. The *Chattanooga Times* alleged that suffrage supporter Newell Sanders was the only railroad lobbyist in Nashville during the ratification campaign. It also claimed that the Louisville and Nashville had induced Representative Joseph Cowan Harris to vote for the amendment. Further, it saw the suffragists' renting special trains to transport their supporters as proof that the railroads supported woman suffrage. Male antisuffragists alleged bribery and corruption because legislators reneged on their pledges.⁶

Antisuffragists maintained that "wets" worked for woman suffrage so that antisuffragists would dispute the federal amendment in the courts, thus lending respectability to their own court battles to rescind the Eighteenth Amendment. Simultaneously, they always denied suffragists' allegations that liquor or manufacturing interests financed their campaign, and during the ratification campaign in Tennessee, they threatened to sue anyone who suggested otherwise.⁷ Nonetheless, the press described Tennessee's NAOWS chairman, Josephine Pearson, in 1922 as "one of the South's most active crusaders for repeal" of the Eighteenth Amendment.⁸ In contrast, Tennessee suffragists apparently supported prohibition, and the Prohibition Party supported suffrage. Most notably, Mrs. Lide Meriwether, an early suffrage leader, also served as WCTU president.⁹ Certainly by 1920, nobody would have acknowledged receiving help from brewers. Since the 1880s, those who did not actively advocate prohibition were seen as "wets." Thus, it had become common in Tennessee politics to accuse one's opponents of receiving support from the liquor industry.¹⁰ Nevertheless, antisuffrage denials ring true

because the liquor industry had few funds with which to campaign against the vitally important prohibition amendment; the industry could, therefore, spare little toward antisuffrage.

Accusations against liquor and railroad interests arose because legislators continually changed their affiliations during the campaign. Some representatives pledged their support to both the suffragists and the antisuffragists. Some NWP members, however, did not see the legislators altering their votes as significant. They realized that many men had yet to decide which way they would vote because most legislators arrived for the special session without having made a firm decision. Thus, suffragists implored the national parties to persuade their members to vote for the amendment. Pollitzer realized that the promises that she gained early in the campaign were not guarantees, and she sought support from local leaders in Tennessee to retain votes. After the Senate had passed the amendment, suffragists could not allow it to come to a vote in the House because they were not certain that they had a majority. Although NAWSA members claimed that antisuffrage forces caused the delay, antisuffrage representatives could only delay the vote if they had a majority.¹¹ If they had in fact possessed sufficient votes, they would have killed the amendment quickly. Clearly, neither side could rely on legislators' promises.

The unreliability of legislators' pledges is not evidence of undue influence by the liquor or railroad industries. By 1920, the power of liquor and railroad interests in Tennessee had been severely curtailed. Tennessee had enacted statewide prohibition in 1909. Although the legislation was not fully effective, proscribing the industry had

limited its political power. Similarly, the Louisville and Nashville Railroad no longer wielded the power in 1920 that it had in the 1890s. Its owners may have opposed woman suffrage, but their previous excursions into politics had not been successful and had brought them considerable public criticism. Further, the federal government had nationalized the railroads during World War I; therefore, they had limited political influence by 1920.¹²

Public investigation had also exposed the activities of the liquor industry. In 1918, the United States Senate investigated the United States Brewers' Association's (USBA) political activities especially those undertaken during World War I. The investigation concluded that brewers' German sympathies had led them to prevent "young German immigrants" from developing into loyal American citizens.¹³ Such conclusions were generated by the prevailing war hysteria of that era. Senators also concluded that the USBA made political contributions, "secretly controlled" the press, influenced primaries and elections, boycotted manufacturers who opposed them, organized secret societies, and evaded taxes by not properly accounting for their activities.¹⁴

Evidence produced at the senate hearings clearly shows that brewers tried to influence the political process in several ways. Brewers used propaganda to defend their interests where prohibition was under consideration. To prevent prohibition even becoming an issue, they actively campaigned in gubernatorial elections to ensure that "wet" governors triumphed. In response to the Anti-Saloon League's attempts to ensure the election of prohibitionists to congress, brewers also campaigned to elect candidates who opposed prohibition. Brewers saw saloons as clubs for working-class men, which led

them to view labor as their natural ally. To ensure that their supporters would vote in elections, therefore, brewers sometimes paid working men's poll tax.¹⁵

The USBA did not confine its interests to the political arena. It maintained a blacklist of companies that opposed brewing interests, but none of those companies were in the South. For instance, brewers boycotted a railroad that banned its employees from drinking alcohol. Such demands sometimes came from employees who were concerned with safe work practices; nevertheless, the brewers still retaliated against the company. Once the senate investigation began, the USBA either ceased to keep minutes of meetings or destroyed their records each month.¹⁶ Such secrecy has led historians to harbor suspicions about the legality of USBA practices and makes it difficult to discover the extent of USBA opposition to woman suffrage. Since the association contended with the far more serious allegation of working against United States' interests in wartime, it probably assigned relatively little importance to the drive for women's enfranchisement.

Writing and distributing propaganda, campaigning in elections, and paying poll tax cost the USBA a substantial amount of money. It financed its activities by levying annual membership dues of half a cent per barrel to both state and local organizations. Additionally, members typically contributed one cent per barrel toward state campaigns and three cents per barrel toward national campaigns. The brewers did not, however, bear the expense alone; the USBA had an agreement with the distillers' association that shared expenses in a 2:1 ratio.¹⁷

As more states enacted prohibition, the resulting loss of production affected the dues the USBA received, which in turn, prevented it from financing big campaigns. After

1916, therefore, it confined its activities to advertising and placing articles in foreign language newspapers. It also secretly financed the purchase of newspapers that then published editorials promoting wine and beer at the expense of whiskey. Texas and Pennsylvania had investigated brewers in 1915 and 1916 respectively so brewers were already on the defensive when the United States entered World War I. The wartime backlash against both Germans and German Americans made supporting German brewers less acceptable to the public.¹⁸

In Tennessee, liquor interests had been under constant pressure because Tennesseans had regulated the industry from the time that it became a state in 1796. Temperance had spread from the Northeast in the 1820s as had abolition. In the 1840s and 1850s, temperance had become a more compelling ideal. Its popularity had led to the enactment of the Four-mile Law, in 1877, which prohibited alcohol within four miles of any school outside an incorporated town. Prohibitionists had succeeded in persuading the Assembly to pass a prohibition amendment in 1885. Since the amendment then required a two-thirds majority in both houses in the next Assembly, the 1886 election had become very important to both prohibition groups and liquor interests. Both sides had campaigned openly for candidates who would espouse their point of view. Similarly, liquor dealers had openly fought and won the subsequent referendum campaign.¹⁹

Pressure for prohibition had forced brewers to encourage liquor sellers to regulate themselves; for instance, they had asked sellers to obey the law by closing on Sundays. In 1908, a branch of the Model License League had formed in Tennessee. This League aimed to reform saloons in the belief that saloon keepers' interference in politics and their

disrespect for laws fueled demands for prohibition. If saloon keepers obeyed the law, the League believed that demands for prohibition would cease. It also suggested that members of the industry should stop holding secret meetings. These attempts at reform were, however, both too little and too late.²⁰

Prohibitionists had continued to campaign for stricter controls on liquor and used the Four-mile Law as a basis for such restrictions. Lawmakers had gradually expanded this legislation so that by 1907 the rural areas and small towns of Tennessee were almost "dry." Only the cities had remained a problem because Nashville, Memphis, and Chattanooga had refused to reincorporate to allow the Four-mile Law to include their municipalities. A new impetus to the demand for statewide prohibition had come when Carmack's death had given prohibition forces a martyr, which had allowed the General Assembly had to enact statewide prohibition in 1909. After 1910, liquor dealers remained in Tennessee because they could still transport liquor across state lines, despite efforts by prohibitionists to limit such actions. Distilling companies, however, mostly left the state.²¹

Prohibition, which had dominated Tennessee's politics in the early part of the twentieth century, had become firmly entrenched in state law. Nevertheless, it remained difficult to enforce despite the ouster of public officials who failed to do so. The General Assembly continued to pass laws aimed at preventing the evasion of existing legislation. For instance, in 1915, legislators had prevented clubs, soft drink stands, and druggists from storing alcohol for customers. By 1916, nobody openly sold alcohol in Nashville. Although a new 1917 law against shipping alcohol into the state made Tennessee legally

“bone dry,” one could still buy alcohol within its boundaries. Nevertheless, prohibition was so popular that few politicians now opposed it, and those who did had no power within their state parties.²² Despite the ineffectiveness of legislation, therefore, the industry had little political power.

Nationally, the USBA had grasped that opposing women’s enfranchisement had been a mistake. The brewers’ active opposition to woman suffrage had often led to bad publicity, but if they were successfully to challenge national prohibition they would need the press on their side. Consequently, the USBA had advised its members to refrain from opposing woman suffrage since it would inevitably spread to all states. Instead, USBA members should educate women so that when they joined the electorate they would oppose prohibition. As early as 1913, the National Association of Commerce and Labor, a “wet” organization that hid its purpose in a neutral title, had advocated organizing women as “wets” to counter the impression fostered by the WCTU that all women favored prohibition.²³

By the time that the ratification campaign for the Nineteenth Amendment moved to Tennessee, the once powerful brewers, who were prone to interfering in politics to protect their industry, had lost much of their power and motivation for opposing women’s enfranchisement. After the United States entered World War I and congress passed the Eighteenth Amendment, the equating of antiprohibition sentiment with pro-German opinion weakened the industry further.²⁴ In that context, suffragists’ complaints against the liquor industry, which they couched in generalities not specifics, sound like political rhetoric, especially in Tennessee where politicians had commonly accused their

opponents of being "wet."²⁵ Moreover, the suffragists never produced the evidence that the liquor industry financed the antisuffrage campaign, which would have allowed them to challenge the antisuffragists' denials. Thus, the evidence shows that the liquor industry was not a major influence on Tennessee's ratification campaign. A similar conclusion can be drawn concerning the Louisville and Nashville Railroad, which suffragists also identified as their enemy.

Tennessee's governors had initially encouraged railroads after the Civil War. William G. Brownlow, governor between 1865 and 1869, had even become a railroad executive when his term expired. In the 1882 gubernatorial primary, however, the Louisville and Nashville and the Nashville American railroads both supported a candidate who attached little importance to railroad regulation. When that candidate lost, the railroads found themselves on the wrong side of the new governor. The Louisville and Nashville, therefore, sent a representative, E. B. Stahlman, to Nashville to organize a campaign against the governor's proposed railroad regulation. By 1884, the Assembly, recognizing the excessive power that railroads wielded, had enacted laws decreeing that tax assessors and railroad commissioners could have no connection with railroads. Nonetheless, the decade ended with Tennessee's still having no effective railroad legislation.²⁶

In 1902, the Louisville and Nashville came under the control of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad, which owned the majority of its stock.²⁷ The Atlantic Coast Line had a "close . . . friendly" relationship with its customers, which served it well in the South where customers expected business to care for their interests.²⁸ Nevertheless, the

Louisville and Nashville suffered public criticism in the 1890s for its rate system that discriminated against short-haul customers. Milton Smith resisted any regulation because he thought that it would lead to confiscation and public ownership. Although rates were regulated in 1916, local discrimination still occurred, and the matter was settled only by the 1920 Transportation Act that regulated minimum as well as maximum rates and limited railroads' profits. When Edward H. Crump was mayor of Memphis, he worked to curb the Louisville and Nashville's power and successfully collected its back taxes. Government's attempts at controlling the railroad pushed the Louisville and Nashville into the political arena where it soon stopped trying to obtain favorable legislation and court verdicts. Instead, it worked to delay or defeat legislative or court action and sought to defeat the politicians who supported regulation.²⁹

When Luke Lea became United States Senator in 1911, he returned his Louisville and Nashville Railroad pass and subsequently initiated a complaint to the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) against the railroad's practice of issuing free passes to legislators. In 1913, all senators and representatives in Tennessee's General Assembly had received free railroad passes. To make matters worse, members of the Assembly also obtained passes worth thousands of dollars for their constituents, and railroads also gave passes directly to other men, such as their attorneys and reporters. The railroad argued that free passes cost less than it appeared because 95 percent of passengers would not have traveled if they had to pay. Legislators maintained that the passes had no influence on their votes because they were all honest men. Despite these protestations, several men lied to the ICC investigators by saying that they had voted to outlaw free passes when

they had not. The Democrats were divided during the 1913 legislature so many ignored their party platform, which called for an end to free passes, and voted against regulation.³⁰ Eventually, however, railroads became trapped in their own system so that they had a “tiger by the tail” rather than, as public opinion thought, controlling the political process by “sinister machinations.”³¹ The ICC investigation revealed that the railroad had improperly recorded its expenses to hide their nature, but it had issued significantly fewer passes in 1915 compared with 1913. Nevertheless, the Louisville and Nashville felt so threatened by the investigation that it successfully organized west Tennessee against Luke Lea’s reelection in 1917.³²

During the ICC investigation, Milton Smith admitted that the Louisville and Nashville sometimes made contributions to campaigns to oppose candidates who threatened the railroad. While he denied that the railroad had regularly contributed to political campaigns, he refused to answer questions about the amount of money expended on them. He argued that rates were independent of revenue because customers were not concerned about the rate for light goods and could negotiate a charter price with the railroad for heavy goods. Operating expenses would have a limited effect on rates, but Smith refused to say whether political contributions would be a legitimate charge on operating expenses.³³ Although the Louisville and Nashville Railroad also lent money to industries and individuals who would “promote traffic,” these loans did not appear correctly in its books.³⁴ Further, all railroads had a secret service branch that worked legally but whose activities the railroad did not want made public.³⁵ More openly, railroads employed lobbyists who attended political conventions and were noted for their

forcefulness. The Louisville and Nashville did not, however, have a lobbyist for the legislature in Tennessee.³⁶

Despite appointing Seth Walker as its local attorney, the Louisville and Nashville denied influencing representatives to vote against ratification. E. B. Stahlman's antisuffrage newspaper, the *Nashville Banner*, noted that the railroad would have no interest in woman suffrage either way given its own problems, and in any event some railroad attorneys, such as Judge Wright, favored suffrage. More reliably, the *Memphis Commercial Appeal* noted that railroad attorneys were lobbying for both sides of the woman suffrage argument. Further, it could see no reason that the railroad would have an interest in the amendment. The *Knoxville Sentinel* expressed the hope that rumors of railroad influence had no foundation because such meddling would not serve the interests of the railroads or the public. Men could have associations with railroads without having to vote against woman suffrage. For instance, Burn worked for the Southern Railway, but that circumstance did not prevent him from voting to ratify.³⁷

The Louisville and Nashville Railroad entered politics with limited goals when issues arose that threatened its perceived interests.³⁸ However, such activities were public knowledge by 1920, and Smith had always fought his political battles "in the open."³⁹ Overall, the railroad's power had declined by 1920. Railroads were less important compared with other industries, and new regulation had reduced their political power. During World War I, the federal government had nationalized the railroads, and the Louisville and Nashville had only recently returned to private ownership in March 1920. Finally, peace had both reduced traffic and increased inflation so the railroad was too

occupied with its own problems to concern itself with woman suffrage.⁴⁰ The Louisville and Nashville Railroad had been involved in politics to protect itself and had often interfered in an unacceptable way in the electoral process. In Tennessee by 1920, however, its power was significantly reduced. Free passes had been exposed, and if the Louisville and Nashville interfered at all in ratification, its influence was limited to offering representatives work.

The once powerful liquor and railroad industries had lost their vigor by 1920. They had been limited, regulated, and banned so that any remaining influence they had made little difference to woman suffrage. In recent years, their political activities had largely been open to scrutiny. Both suffragists and their opponents charged each other with receiving support from corrupt industries. Since suffragists paid railroads for trains, it seems unlikely that they received any secret support from that direction. Conversely, if the railroads had supported the antisuffragists, they would hardly have rented trains to suffrage supporters to ensure their presence at the vote. Certainly, no direct evidence of bribery exists, and the grand jury investigation revealed nothing untoward. Since liquor and railroads had opposed woman suffrage in the past, their nefarious reputation with large segments of the population allowed both suffragists and antisuffragists to portray themselves as poor defenseless women who were only seeking to protect their rights while battling powerful forces of evil who opposed their ambitions for reform.⁴¹

ENDNOTES

1. *Chattanooga Times*, 2 August 1920, 1.
2. *Nashville Tennessean*, 19 August 1920, 6.
3. Catt and Shuler, *Woman Suffrage and Politics*, 102; "Ratification in Tennessee," n.d. NAWSA Papers.
4. Catt and Shuler, *Woman Suffrage and Politics*, 446.
5. Headquarters Secretary, [Washington, D.C.], to Mrs. Tod Hammond, 16 August 1920, NWP Papers; Sims, "Powers that Pray," 213-4; Anita Pollitzer, to Alice Paul, 29 July 1920, NWP Papers.
6. *Nashville Banner*, 21 August 1920, 1, 3; "Tennessee," *Woman Citizen*, 18 August 1920; *Chattanooga Times*, 10 August 1920, 1; *Chattanooga Times*, 17 August 1920, 1; *Chattanooga Times*, 18 August 1920, 4.
7. *Chattanooga Times*, 17 August 1920, 1; *Chattanooga Times*, 18 August 1920, 1; *Woman Patriot*, 3 July 1920, 5; *Chattanooga Times*, 10 August 1920, 1; *Nashville Banner*, 28 August 1920, 1.
8. News Clipping, n.d. 1922, Josephine A. Pearson Papers.
9. Camhi in *Women Against Women*, shows that liquor dealers and brewers helped distribute antisuffrage propaganda and certainly opposed woman suffrage but admits that the liquor industry and antisuffragists had no common philosophy, 104-106; Sims, "Powers that Pray," 214-5; Morgan, *Suffragists and Democrats*, 185, 163; McDonagh, "The Significance of the Nineteenth Amendment," 81, 79; Taylor, *Woman Suffrage in Tennessee*, 17; *Chattanooga Times*, 12 August 1920, 4; Isaac, *Prohibition and Politics*, 14.
10. Folmsbee, Corlew and Mitchell, *Tennessee*, 425; Isaac, *Prohibition and Politics*, 39; Tidwell, *Luke Lea*, 44, 70.

11. *Chattanooga Times*, 16 August 1920, 1; Emma Wold, to Caroline Spencer, 28 July 1920, NWP Papers; *Knoxville Journal and Tribune*, 9 August 1920, 1; Alice Paul, [Washington, D.C.], to Kate Hayden, Columbus, 6 August 1920, NWP Papers; Anita Pollitzer, Knoxville, to Alice Paul, [Washington, D.C.], 29 July 1920, NWP Papers; Headquarters Secretary, [Washington, D.C.], to Mrs. Albion Lang, Windsor, Vermont, 13 August 1920, NWP Papers; Catt and Shuler, *Woman Suffrage and Politics*, 445.
12. Klein, *Louisville and Nashville Railroad*, 395, 380-5.
13. Congress, Senate, Subcommittee on the Judiciary, *Report of the Subcommittee on the Judiciary United States Senate pursuant to S. Res. 307 and 436 sixty-fifth congress Relating to charges made against the United States Brewers' Association and Allied Interests* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1919), 1.
14. Senate, *Report on USBA*, 2, 3.
15. Senate, *Report and Hearings on the USBA*, 58, 336, 70, 356, 363, 411, 419.
16. *Ibid.*, 117-8, 216, 256, 308, 342.
17. *Ibid.*, 77-9, 65-6.
18. Senate, *Report and Hearings on the USBA*, 422, 483, 485, 658, 735; Morgan, *Suffragists and Democrats*, 163-4.
19. Isaac, *Prohibition and Politics*, 1, 3, 6, 17, 28, 44, 55-6; Wolfe, *Lucius Polk Brown*, 49.
20. Folmsbee, Corlew, and Mitchell, *Tennessee*, 439; Isaac, *Prohibition and Politics*, 93, 135-7.
21. Wolfe, *Lucius Polk Brown*, 49; Tidwell, *Luke Lea*, 45; Isaac, *Prohibition and Politics*, 224, 227, 171.
22. Thorogood, *A Financial History*, 88; Tidwell, *Luke Lea*, 66-7; Isaac, *Prohibition and Politics*, 242, 247, 253-4, 249.
23. Senate, *Report and Hearings on the USBA*, 779, 360, 412.
24. Isaac, *Prohibition and Politics*, 258.

25. Isaac, "Defeat and Victory," 56.

26. Majors, *Change and Continuity*, 12-3; Klein, *Louisville and Nashville Railroad*, 376-7; Milliken and Vertrees, *Code of Tennessee*, 140, 400.

27. Howard Douglas Dozier, *A History of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1920), x.

28. Ibid., 160.

29. Congress, Senate, Interstate Commerce Commission, 64th Congress 1st session *Senate Louisville & Nashville Railroad Co. Hearings before the Interstate Commerce Commission Relative to the Financial Relations, Rates, and Practices of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad Co., the Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis Railway, and other carriers* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1916), 348, 347, 407; Klein, *Louisville and Nashville Railroad*, 357, 374, 372, 361, 364-6, 368; Miller, *Mr. Crump*, 91-2.

30. ICC, *Louisville and Nashville Hearings*, 5, 10-1, 13-4, 30-1, 43, 54-6, 74, 76, 93, 120, 405; C. Cason and J. D. Green, *House Journal of the Fifty-Eighth General Assembly of the State of Tennessee which convened at Nashville, Monday, January 6, A.D. 1913* (Nashville: McQuiddy Printing Co., 1913), 323; Klein, *Louisville and Nashville*, 371, 379, 368; Tidwell, *Luke Lea*, 36; The 1906 Hepburn Act only proscribed free passes on interstate journeys; Rebel C. Forrester and Betty B. Wood, ed. "I had a real good time . . ." *The Making of a Country Editor: The Recollections of James M. Brice of the News-Banner of Troy, Tennessee (1862-1926)* (Union City, TN: Betty B. Wood and Rebel C. Forrester, 1984), 157.

31. Klein, *Louisville and Nashville*, 379.

32. ICC, *Louisville and Nashville Hearings*, 5; Congress, Senate, Interstate Commerce Commission, *Senate Document No. 219 65th Congress 2d Session "Interstate Commerce Commission Supplemental Report" 26 March 1918 Supplemental Report of the Commission to the Senate of the United States No. 6319 in re financial relations, rates and practices of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad Company, the Nashville, Chattanooga & Louis Railway, and other carriers* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1918), 2; Tidwell, *Luke Lea*, 73.

33. ICC, *Louisville and Nashville Hearings*, 270, 301, 355, 357-8; ICC, *Supplemental Report*, 3.

34. ICC, *Louisville and Nashville Hearings*, 401, 402.

35. The ICC did not question this statement at all, which suggests that it was fully aware of this secret service. I believe it likely, therefore, that this group of men worked to defeat labor organization.

36. ICC, *Louisville and Nashville Hearings*, 401, 402, 441-2, 62-3, 87, 448.

37. *Nashville Banner*, 28 August 1920, 4; *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, 17 August 1920, 1; *Knoxville Sentinel*, 17 August 1920, 5, 8; *Knoxville Journal and Tribune*, 22 August 1920, 1; *Chattanooga Times*, 23 August 1920, 1, 2; *Nashville Banner*, 19 August 1920, 6; *Chattanooga Times*, 19 August 1920, 4, 2; Cornwell, *Biographical Directory*, 86.

38. Klein, *Louisville and Nashville*, 394.

39. *Ibid.*, 380-5, 418.

40. *Ibid.*, 375-7, 415.

41. Sims, "Powers that Pray," 213-214.

CHAPTER 7--STATE LEGISLATORS' VOTING PATTERNS

If legislators did not change their votes because they suffered from corporate influence, another explanation is needed to account for their apparently rapid changes of opinion.¹ Catt left men considered "briable" out of her calculations of how many legislators would vote for the amendment to ensure that she did not include uncertain votes.² Nevertheless, men who had voted for presidential suffrage, supported ratification, and signed pledges of support, changed their minds before the vote.³ Moreover, historians often link opposition to woman suffrage to opposition both to child labor laws and to prohibition. Legislators' voting patterns on progressive reforms, prohibition, and woman suffrage are, therefore, studied in this investigation.

Progressives wanted an ordered society, which they thought would foster economic progress. They, therefore, tried to end corruption in government and reduce the power of big business. To this end, they wanted to ensure that government responded to the people. Southern progressives defined "the people" as white, middle-class, males. In Tennessee, progressive legislation was fairly limited. Tennessee's 1913 legislature voted on two progressive issues: compulsory school attendance for eight to fourteen year olds, and a failed attempt to prevent railroads from issuing free passes. In 1915, the legislature voted to oust local politicians who failed to enforce Tennessee's laws, and the 1917

session introduced a compulsory primary. Forcing children to attend school was not as progressive as strengthening child labor laws, but while children attended school, they could not be working. Trying to prevent railroads from issuing free passes represented a desire to limit railroads' power and force them to conform to the 1906 Hepburn Act, federal legislation that outlawed free passes on interstate traffic. The 1915 Ouster Law reflected progressivism because it sought to enforce social control and hold public officials to a state-defined standard. It aimed to remove mayors who did not enforce prohibition. Primaries gave more men the opportunity of choosing candidates than the system of party conventions though blacks still voted only to the limited extent that they did in elections.⁴

Prohibition legislation spanned a long period, but Tennessee had undergone many changes in the previous ten years. This investigation will, therefore, examine only the three laws passed in 1917 designed to make Tennessee "bone dry" and the 1919 vote to ratify the Eighteenth Amendment. Several votes on one issue should show whether legislators typically voted consistently on one topic. Considered together, they should highlight any differences in attitudes toward federal compared with state legislation.

To analyze voting patterns, the name, party affiliation, county, and therefore division, of each representative and senator in these four legislatures were noted. Since representatives and senators changed over the years, this record shows how different counties voted on the issues and should show to what extent constituents influenced their legislators. Some representatives and most senators represented constituencies that comprised more than one county. Then, the constituency is considered as a whole.

Examining how the parties and divisions voted will also show whether members voted by party or by division. For the purposes of analysis, only those voting directly for and against an issue were considered because it would be very difficult to speculate on the opinions of absentees. The percentages of absentees and abstentions are, however, shown on the tables. Once a pattern is established, it should be possible to understand whether politicians voted as expected in the final ratification vote. If they did so, undue influence would not have affected their vote. Different voting patterns between woman suffrage and other issues may also show whether gender, race, politics, or economics primarily affected the ratification vote.

Unfortunately, examining the votes in the Assembly shows that legislators had many influences on their opinions so that no one influence dominated their vote. Neither party, nor division, nor their constituents consistently dominated legislators' voting patterns. Sometimes, city bosses controlled some legislators' votes; yet, even they did not always win the desired result. Legislators did not, therefore, vote consistently; they decided which influence held the most sway on a particular issue and voted accordingly. Their votes were, then, essentially personal decisions that render them unpredictable.

In the 1913 House vote on compulsory school attendance, all eastern representatives present supported the measure (See Table 1). The strongest opposition came from middle Tennessee where almost 13 percent of representatives voted against the motion.

Table 1. Percentage of House votes on progressive measures

		Compulsory Schooling			Compulsory Primary			Ouster Law			Outlaw Free Passes		
		aye	nay	ab	aye	nay	ab	aye	nay	ab	aye	nay	ab
East	Democrat	77.78	0	22.22	85.71	14.29	0	50	50	0	55.56	44.44	0
	Republican	89.47	0	10.53	95	5	0	100	0	0	15.79	78.95	5.26
	All	85.71	0	14.29	92.59	7.41	0	85.71	14.29	0	28.57	67.86	3.57
Middle	Democrat	80.55	13.89	5.56	86.49	0	13.51	78.38	16.22	5.4	55.56	38.89	5.55
	Republican	100	0	0	100	0	0	100	0	0	33.33	66.67	0
	All	82.05	12.82	5.13	87.18	0	12.82	79.49	15.38	5.13	38.46	56.41	5.13
West	Democrat	80	4	16	84.62	0	15.38	64.29	32.14	3.57	32	52	16
	Republican	100	0	0	100	0	0	100	0	0	50	50	0
	All	80.65	6.45	12.9	87.1	0	12.9	67.74	29.03	3.23	38.71	48.39	12.9
Democrat		80.28	8.45	11.27	85.91	1.41	12.68	69.86	26.03	4.11	38.03	53.52	8.45
Republican		92.31	0	7.69	96.15	3.85	0	100	0	0	23.08	73.08	3.84

Division alone did not, however, dictate how representatives would vote because more than 82 percent of representatives from middle Tennessee supported the measure compared to almost 86 percent of eastern representatives, which is not a significant difference. Neither did they vote on strict party lines; no Republicans and only 8 percent of Democrats voted against the measure.

Middle Tennessee's Democratic delegation, however, opposed the measure by almost 14 percent. Two of these five representatives gave reasons for their vote. W. J. Matthews, a Democrat from middle Tennessee, opposed the measure because representatives had no opportunity to amend the legislation, and his county already had a compulsory education law. Similarly, Lytton Glynn Acree, also a middle Tennessee Democrat, voted against the measure because it applied to every county without exception.⁵ These men perceived statewide legislation as a threat to local autonomy much as states' rights advocates saw federal legislation as threatening state sovereignty. Although it seems that Republicans took advantage of the Democrats' disunity to ally with eastern and western Democrats to pass the compulsory school law, Matthews and Acree also made decisions independently from their party and division.

In the Senate's vote on the same subject, middle Tennessee's opposition became even more noticeable (See Table 2).⁶ All the dissenting votes came from middle Tennessee where all the senators were Democrats. Still, no western Democrats opposed compulsory schooling so party was not the defining criterion. Unfortunately, the Republican senators all came from east Tennessee so it becomes difficult to distinguish between division and party in the Senate. Neither the two eastern Democratic senators nor

the two whose constituencies overlapped between east and middle Tennessee, however, voted against the measure. It seems therefore, that east Tennessee, whatever its political affiliations, wanted compulsory education. Both the Senate and the House votes show that Republicans and Democrats from east and west Tennessee supported compulsory education, while middle Tennessee shows more conservatism.

Table 2. Percentage of Senate votes on progressive measures

		Compulsory Schooling			Compulsory Primary			Ouster Law		
		aye	nay	ab	aye	nay	ab	aye	nay	ab
East	Democrat	50	0	50	0	100	0	50	0	50
	Republican	100	0	0	83.33	16.67	0	100	0	0
	All	87.5	0	12.5	62.5	37.5	0	87.5	0	12.5
Middle	Democrat	61.54	30.77	7.69	76.92	15.39	7.69	100	0	0
	Republican	0	0	0	0	0	0	100	0	0
	All	61.54	30.77	7.69	76.92	15.39	7.69	100	0	0
West	Democrat	80	0	20	90	10	0	55.56	33.33	11.11
	Republican	0	0	0	0	0	0	100	0	0
	All	80	0	20	90	10	0	60	30	10
Democrat		66.67	14.81	18.52	74.07	22.22	3.71	80	12	8
Republican		100	0	0	83.33	16.67	0	100	0	0

The House voted more strongly for the compulsory primary. More than 96 percent of Republicans and almost 86 percent of Democrats favored the measure (See Table 1). T. K. Reynolds, a western Democrat, voted for the measure because he was “committed to a Primary Election Law”; however, he wanted to record the people’s opposition to a law that would dismantle “Home Rule.”⁷ He would have preferred the law to apply only to state offices and to allow only the constituents of congressional districts to select their United States representatives.⁸ Despite his reservations, only one person from each party voted against the measure, both of whom came from east Tennessee. Despite that small opposition, all the other eastern Tennessee representatives voted in favor, including the two men whose constituencies comprised counties in both east and middle Tennessee. For this issue, then, representatives voted neither on strict party lines nor rigidly by their division, but east Tennessee mounted both the strongest opposition and the strongest support. Since a Republican and a Democrat from east Tennessee supported each other in opposing the issue, it seems that allegiance to their division caused representatives to deviate from their parties’ agreement to implement primaries. Individuals again showed concern that state power would dominate local power.

Again, the Senate opposed the compulsory primary much more vigorously than did the House (See Table 2).⁹ While the strongest opposition came from the east, it was not confined to that division; some opposition also came from middle and west Tennessee. Despite eastern opposition, proportionately more Democrats than Republicans voted against the compulsory primary with more than 22 percent of Democrats and 16 percent of Republicans voting against the measure. Here, the Senate vote provides a

much more complicated picture than does that of the House. In neither the House nor the Senate, however, does voting for the compulsory primary seem closely related to support for compulsory school attendance.

Voting on the Ouster Law gives further insight into influences on legislators. Hilary Howse of Nashville and Edward Crump of Memphis, both of whom failed to enforce prohibition, expected to lose their mayoral positions if the Ouster Law passed. Nevertheless, they were both Democrats so one would expect to see strong Republican support for the measure. Every Republican in the House, whatever his division, voted for the Ouster Law; there were no dissenting votes and no absentees (See Table 1). Party affiliation was, therefore, extremely important to the voting on this measure. Yet, even this issue was not simply a party matter because eastern representatives supported the measure to a greater extent than their western and middle colleagues. Such a difference is not surprising because the law would have no immediate repercussions in east Tennessee; therefore, the issue received less opposition from that division. In fact, the eastern Democrats divided equally on the issue.

West Tennessee mounted the greatest opposition to the Ouster Law. Not surprisingly, since more than 28 percent of the western representatives came from Shelby County, 32 percent of western Democrats opposed the measure. Similarly, all the Davidson County representatives present voted against the motion.¹⁰ If one excludes the Shelby and Davidson delegations, however, 93 percent of members from middle Tennessee and 91 percent of western members supported the Ouster Law. Without the Shelby and Davidson delegations, only 10 percent of Democrats opposed the measure.

Half of those were from Hamilton County, which also resisted prohibition.¹¹ Apart from city representatives, only one Democrat from each division opposed the Ouster Law. Very little difference, therefore, existed between the parties or the divisions. Instead, the strongest opposition came from those men influenced by the city bosses. Howse and Crump, therefore, affected voting patterns on this issue.

Voting in the Senate reflected that of the House. Again, all the Republicans voted for the measure with no absentees and no dissenting votes (See Table 2).¹² The only opposition came from the three Democratic senators from Shelby. Surprisingly, even the two Davidson County senators both voted for the motion. Hamilton County's senator was, however, absent. Apart from revealing Crump's power over his delegation, the vote shows that there was cross party and cross division support for the Ouster Law, which probably reflected its link to the popular prohibition issue.

The 1913 attempt to limit railroads' influence, by preventing them from issuing free passes, failed. Since the Senate never voted on this issue, only the representatives' opinions are available for examination (See Table 1). Republicans in the House opposed the measure much more than did Democrats. Although middle and west Tennessee favored the measure in similar proportions, a greater percentage of middle Tennessee representatives voted against the motion than did their western colleagues. F. E. Bryant, from west Tennessee, voted to prohibit free passes because his constituents thought that representatives were corruptible and had no other duties apart from obtaining passes.¹³ Republican and Democratic representatives from west Tennessee voted against the measure in similar proportions, but more Republicans from middle Tennessee voted

against the proposition than did their Democratic colleagues. The greatest difference, however, occurred in east Tennessee where fewer than 50 percent of Democrats voted against the measure while almost 79 percent of Republicans did so. The Democrats' disunity makes voting patterns on this issue especially obscure. Since the Democratic Party was divided into Regular and Independent Democrats during this legislature, representatives could easily ignore their party's platform to vote against the reform. Although Regular Democrats had a majority and most of the Shelby delegation supported free pass legislation, they could not raise enough votes to enact the law.¹⁴ Representatives, therefore, seem to have voted according to perceived personal advantage rather than by faction, party, or division.

Evaluating the legislative votes on these progressive reforms shows that members of the Assembly did not vote according to a pattern. Members considered each issue on its merits and decided whether party, division, or city bosses' instructions took precedence. Each division strongly supported different issues, but support for one progressive issue did not indicate support for all. Of the two parties, the Republicans more than Democrats generally favored progressive legislation, however, the latter voted more strongly, though not convincingly, for banning free railroad passes. Party affiliation alone did not dominate Tennessee politics. Although Democrats held about 73 percent of the seats in the House and about 80 percent in the Senate, factions split the party, forcing members to build alliances with the Republicans. Coalitions and alliances changed, however, depending on the issue. Representatives did not, therefore, vote clearly by

party, nor by division, but by a mixture of the two that makes it difficult to predict their votes in the future.

Examining several votes on one subject may reveal more about other influences on legislators' decisions. On 16 January 1917, the House voted on three related issues, preventing distribution of liquor, preventing storage of liquor, and preventing receiving orders for liquor. The votes in each case were very similar though not the same, mostly because the number of absentees varied (See Table 3). Two men changed their votes from "nay" to "aye" between the first and second votes. One was an eastern Republican, the other a western Democrat from Shelby County. Of the other six Shelby delegates, three consistently voted for the measures and one was always absent. One man either voted "aye" or was absent; the other either voted "nay" or was absent. Clearly, they planned their votes though the objective is unclear.

Middle Tennessee overwhelmingly favored all three laws with no dissenting votes. East Tennessee also strongly favored the measures with a maximum of 11 percent ever opposed. West Tennessee's position is less clear. Although never more than 6.5 percent of representatives opposed any of the measures, fewer than 78 percent of representatives ever voted in favor. Republicans and Democrats both supported the laws by between 84 and 89 percent. Differences, however, existed between the two parties; for instance, almost 8 percent of Republicans opposed the first law, while only 4 percent of Democrats did so. Although prohibition laws enjoyed cross party and cross division support, representatives changed their votes depending on the particular measure.

Table 3. Percentage of House votes on prohibition

		Bone Dry I			Bone Dry II			Bone Dry III			18 Amendment		
		aye	nay	ab	aye	nay	ab	aye	nay	ab	aye	nay	ab
East	Democrat	85.71	14.29	0	85.71	14.29	0	85.71	14.29	0	75	25	0
	Republican	85	10	5	90	5	5	90	5	5	100	0	0
	All	85.19	11.11	3.7	88.89	7.41	3.7	88.89	7.41	3.7	96.3	3.7	0
Middle	Democrat	89.19	0	10.81	89.19	0	10.81	94.59	0	5.41	84.21	5.26	10.53
	Republican	100	0	0	100	0	0	100	0	0	100	0	0
	All	89.74	0	10.26	89.74	0	10.26	94.87	0	5.13	84.61	5.13	10.26
West	Democrat	76.92	7.69	15.39	76.92	3.85	19.23	80.77	0	19.23	85.19	11.11	3.7
	Republican	66.67	0	33.33	66.67	0	33.33	66.67	0	33.33	100	0	0
	All	74.19	6.45	19.36	74.19	3.23	22.58	77.42	0	22.58	84.61	5.13	10.26
Democrat		84.51	4.22	11.27	84.51	2.81	12.68	88.73	1.41	9.86	82.86	8.57	8.57
Republican		84.62	7.69	7.69	88.46	3.85	7.69	88.46	3.85	7.69	100	0	0

*Includes one representative present but not voting

Table 4. Percentage of Senate votes on prohibition

		Bone Dry I			Bone Dry II			Bone Dry III			18 Amendment		
		aye	nay	ab	aye	nay	ab	aye	nay	ab	aye	nay	ab
East	Democrat	100	0	0	100	0	0	100	0	0	100	0	0
	Republican	100	0	0	100	0	0	100	0	0	100	0	0
	All	100	0	0	100	0	0	100	0	0	100	0	0
Middle/Democrat		92.31	7.69	0	92.31	7.69	0	92.31	7.69	0	92.31	7.69	0
West/Democrat		80	20	0	90	10	0	90	10	0	80	0	20
Democrat		88.89	11.11	0	92.59	7.41	0	92.59	7.41	0	84.62	7.69	7.69
Republican		84.62	7.69	7.69	88.46	3.85	7.69	88.46	3.85	7.69	100	0	0

This situation becomes clearer when examining the vote in the Senate. When the Senate voted on these “bone dry” laws, no absentees clouded the issue, yet the votes were not all exactly the same (See Table 4). Three Democrats changed their votes depending on the measure. One, from middle Tennessee, voted to prevent the storage of liquor while opposing any ban on distribution or accepting orders. Another, from the same division, approved exactly the reverse. A third, from west Tennessee, voted to ban both storing and receiving orders for liquor but voted against banning its distribution. Clearly, neither party nor division was the only influence on senators’ votes. Apparently, they considered each law on its merits. Tennessee’s Assembly, therefore, seems to have been finely balanced with little difference between parties or divisions and a few votes changing between issues even when those issues were closely related.

The Assembly had a further opportunity to consider prohibition when it ratified the Eighteenth Amendment. In the House, east Tennessee opposed ratification less than it had opposed the “bone dry” laws because one previous opponent voted “aye” and an earlier absentee now voted (See Table 3). Both middle and west Tennessee, however, increased their opposition because two additional representatives from middle Tennessee voted against ratification, and three men from Shelby voted against it. Shelby County had internal dissension over a new city management plan so Crump had temporarily lost control of the delegation.¹⁵ The net effect of the Shelby delegation’s vote on ratification of the Eighteenth Amendment, however, was entirely neutral because three representatives voted for, three against, and one absented himself. Nevertheless, 10

percent more west Tennesseans supported the amendment than had voted for the “bone dry” laws.

Republican opposition disappeared as Hamilton County representatives voted 2:1 for instead of 2:1 against prohibition.¹⁶ Democratic opposition doubled between the “bone dry” votes and that for the Eighteenth Amendment. This increase was due to the opposition from the Shelby representatives and the two additional “nay” votes from middle Tennessee. Larkin Moore Whitaker, a Democrat from middle Tennessee, recorded himself as present but not voting because the Assembly had not allowed a referendum on the question so he did not know his constituents’ opinion.¹⁷ He was the only representative to raise the states’ rights issue, and almost as many Democrats ratified the Eighteenth Amendment as voted for the first two “bone dry” laws. Similarly, the *Chattanooga Times* was the only major newspaper to raise a protest against a federal amendment. It argued that Tennessee already had prohibition so it did not see the necessity of ratifying an amendment that would force prohibition on states that opposed it. Further, it would require many federal police to enforce the law, and they would fail to do so because they would agree with the opposition.¹⁸ The House, therefore, still strongly supported prohibition whether it came by state or national efforts though a small minority of Democratic representatives clearly had their reservations.

Although five senators voted differently on the Eighteenth Amendment than their predecessors had on the “bone dry” law, those differences made minimal difference to the broad picture. All the Republicans voted for ratification without any absentees as they had for the “bone dry” laws (See Table 4). Democratic support dropped, but most

Democratic senators still also voted to ratify the Eighteenth Amendment. Frank Fuller of Shelby had voted for the “bone dry” laws, but was absent for the ratification vote. The other Shelby senator had voted against the “bone dry” laws, but his replacement voted to ratify the Eighteenth Amendment. Similarly, the Democratic senator from Montgomery County in middle Tennessee had voted against two of the “bone dry” measures, but his successor now voted for ratification.

Only two Democrats opposed the Eighteenth Amendment, James Rice and Walter Cameron, whose predecessors had both voted for the “bone dry” laws. Both Cameron and Rice gave their reasons for opposing the Eighteenth Amendment. Cameron, whose constituency spanned counties in east and middle Tennessee, disapproved of the amendment because the people had no opportunity to vote on federal amendments as they did on state amendments that required a referendum. Similarly Rice, who represented three counties in middle Tennessee, voted against the amendment because he did not know the people’s wishes.¹⁹ These two men, then, wanted to keep power within the state rather than releasing it to the federal government.

Historians frequently give southern concerns for states’ rights as a reason for southern opposition to a federal woman suffrage amendment.²⁰ Although Cameron’s and Rice’s statements support such a view, twenty-nine other senators clearly worried little about the consequences of a federal prohibition amendment because they voted for it. Even assuming that two senators absented themselves because of states’ rights concerns, they would only represent 12 percent of senators and 15 percent of Democrats. Fear of

federal intervention alone was insufficient reason for even Democratic senators in Tennessee to oppose an amendment.

Since neither fear of federal intervention, nor party loyalty, nor divisional concerns dominated legislators' votes, apparently their vote depended on how they saw the issue. Every vote was different; sometimes party and sometimes division became more important to them, but presumably they considered each issue on its merits. Whether it was good for the state, their constituents, and their own political careers seem likely reasons for their decisions. In this light, they would have evaluated woman suffrage as they did every other issue. Tennessee considered enfranchising women four times between 1915 and 1920 by three different methods: a state constitutional amendment, presidential and municipal suffrage, and ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment. Legislators, therefore, had plenty of opportunity to reveal their opinions on woman suffrage.

ENDNOTES

1. Bucy, "Thrill of History Making," 233.
2. Catt and Shuler, *Woman Suffrage and Politics*, 437.
3. Alice Paul, [Washington, D.C.], to Kate Hayden, Columbus, 6 August 1920, NWP Papers.
4. Grantham, *Southern Progressivism*, xvii, xxii; Biles, "Robert R. Church," 376.
5. Cason and Green, *House Journal 1913*, 340.
6. Tennessee, *Senate Journal of the Fifty-Eighth General Assembly of the State of Tennessee which convened at Nashville, Monday, January 6, A.D. 1913* (Nashville: McQuiddy Printing Co., 1913), 362.
7. J. D. Green and Harry A. Wilson, *House Journal of the Sixtieth General Assembly of the State of Tennessee which convened at Nashville, Monday, January 1st, A.D. 1917* (Jackson, TN: McCowat-Mercer Printing Co., 1917), 995-6.
8. Ibid.
9. William Carter and High T. Bennett, *Senate Journal of the Sixtieth General Assembly of the State of Tennessee which convened at Nashville, Monday, January 1st, A.D. 1917* (Jackson, TN: McCowat-Mercer Printing Co., 1917), 1103; The Senate Journal gave the vote as 25 to 7, but it had two names as voting both for and against the issue. I selected the western Democrat as voting in favor and the Democrat with a constituency overlapping east and middle Tennessee as voting against. This decision reflects the way their colleagues in the House voted, which is not entirely satisfactory, but it makes minimal difference to the broad picture.
10. Nashville is in Davidson County, middle Tennessee.
11. Chattanooga is in Hamilton County, east Tennessee.

12. Tennessee, *Senate Journal of the Fifty-Ninth General Assembly of the State of Tennessee which convened at Nashville, Monday, January 4, A.D. 1915* (Jackson, TN: McCowat-Mercer Printing Co., 1915), 184.

13. ICC, *Hearings on Louisville and Nashville*, 80-1.

14. Tidwell, *Luke Lea*, 49; ICC, *Hearings on Louisville and Nashville*, 22-3.

15. *Knoxville Journal and Tribune*, 7 January 1919, 16.

16. Hamilton County had two Democratic and one Republican representative. At the “bone dry” vote the Republican and one Democrat voted against, while the other Democrat supported the measure. At ratification of the Eighteenth Amendment, however, the Republican and one Democrat voted for the measure, and the other Democrat voted against.

17. Green and Totty, *House Journal 1919*, 72.

18. *Chattanooga Times*, 5 January 1919, 4.

19. William Carter and Hugh T. Bennett, *Senate Journal of the Sixty-First General Assembly of the State of Tennessee which convened at Nashville, Monday, January 6, 1919* (Jackson, TN: McCowat-Mercer Printing Co., 1919), 47.

20. Morgan, *Suffragists and Democrats*, 184; Wolfe, *Daughters of Canaan*, 206. Wheeler, *New Women*, 4; Kraditor, *Ideas*, 197.

CHAPTER 8--TENNESSEE'S WOMAN SUFFRAGE VOTES

Legislators' voting patterns on progressive issues and on prohibition bear no relationship to their votes on woman suffrage. The latter suffered from greater opposition than the other measures though middle Tennessee remained the most conservative division. Differences between the voting patterns across the three methods of enfranchising women show that legislators' votes did not change simply depending on the type of suffrage involved. Although antisuffragists claimed that ratification of the federal amendment would threaten the state's right to choose its own electorate, Catt was correct in her assumption that antirratificationists were largely antisuffragists.¹ Further, opposition mounted over the years, which may be attributable to antisuffragists' efforts. It may also, however, reflect legislators' fears that they would lose power if women joined the electorate. Legislators do not seem to have succumbed to bribery, however. Finally, Tennessee's growing urbanization does not help predict how legislators voted.

Tennessee first considered a state constitutional amendment to enfranchise women in 1915. Although it passed comfortably, that circumstance does not show overwhelming support for woman suffrage because this vote was only a first step on a long road to achieving a state amendment. The 1915 vote gave politicians an opportunity to display their support for the issue, if they thought that it would gain them popularity

with their constituents. It would not, however, make any change whatsoever. Voting for this amendment does not, therefore, signify that legislators would always vote for women's enfranchisement, but voting against it shows definite opposition either by the legislator or by his constituents.

In the House, the state suffrage amendment passed by fewer votes than any other issue yet considered here (See Table 5). Although it made no change in women's right to vote, more representatives voted against the amendment than against any other issue except the Ouster Law. Further, more men were absent from the vote than from any other, including the failed attempt to ban railroad passes. The greatest opposition came from middle Tennessee where more than 25 percent of representatives opposed state suffrage for women. Additionally, another middle Tennessee Democrat, H. T. Stewart, opposed women's enfranchisement, but he voted for the amendment "as a courtesy to the ladies" to help publicize their cause.² Only one eastern representative opposed the measure. Although he was a Democrat, the other five eastern Democrats, who represented three counties, voted in favor.

Fewer than 10 percent of western representatives opposed the state amendment including one of the seven Shelby delegates, which reflects Crump's support for woman suffrage. Almost 18 percent of Democrats voted against a state suffrage amendment while fewer than 4 percent of Republicans did so. The one Republican opponent, Representative Phillips, came from middle Tennessee, but neither his Republican colleague in that division nor the Republican whose constituency included counties in east and middle Tennessee joined him.

Table 5. Percentage of House votes on woman suffrage

		State Suffrage			Presidential Suffrage 1917			Presidential Suffrage 1919			Table 19 th Amendment			19 th Amendment		
		aye	nay	ab	aye	nay	ab	aye	nay	ab	aye	nay	ab	aye	nay	ab
East	Democrat	62.5	12.5	25	14.29	28.57	57.14	50	50	0	20	80	0	80	20	0
	Republican	80	0	20	85	0	15	59.09	18.18	22.73	33.33	61.91	4.76	66.67	28.57	4.76
	All	75	3.57	21.43	66.67	7.41	25.92	59.26	22.22	18.52	33.33	62.97	3.7	66.67	29.63	3.7
Middle	Democrat	64.87	24.32	10.81	40.54	48.65	10.81	44.74	44.74	10.52	73.69	23.68	2.63	26.32	71.05	2.63
	Republican	0	50	50	100	0	0	0	100	0	100	0	0	0	100	0
	All	61.54	25.64	12.82	43.59	46.15	10.26	43.59	46.15	10.26	74.36	23.08	2.56	25.64	71.8	2.56
West	Democrat	75	10.71	14.29	73.08	15.38	11.54	70.37	18.52	11.11	22.22	77.78	0	77.78	22.22	0
	Republican	100	0	0	66.67	0	33.33	0	66.67	33.33	66.67	0	33.33	0	66.67	33.33
	All	77.42	9.68	12.9	74.19	12.905	12.905	64.52	22.58	12.9	25.81	70.97	3.22	70.97	25.81	3.22
Democrat		68.49	17.81	13.7	49.3	33.8	16.9	54.29	35.71	10	50.7	47.89	1.41	49.295	49.295	1.41
Republican		76.92	3.85	19.23	84.61	0	15.39	51.85	25.93	22.22	42.31	50	7.69	53.85	38.46	7.69

Middle Tennessee, however, strongly opposed women's enfranchisement even by state action and even when it posed no immediate threat to the status quo. Again, men voted more by personal considerations than by party allegiance.

The Senate voted on each reading of the state suffrage amendment; therefore, it provides three votes to consider. No Republican ever voted against the motion; neither did any senator from east or west Tennessee (See Table 6). None of the three opponents from middle Tennessee opposed all the readings, and two of them voted for the measure at least once. One of these voted "aye" twice before voting "nay" on the final reading.

Table 6. Percentage of Senate votes on a state suffrage amendment

		State Suffrage I			State Suffrage II			State Suffrage III		
		aye	nay	ab	aye	nay	ab	aye	nay	ab
East	Democrat	50	0	50	100	0	0	100	0	0
	Republican	100	0	0	83.33	0	16.67	83.33	0	16.67
	All	87.5	0	12.5	87.5	0	12.5	87.5	0	12.5
Middle	Democrat	66.67	8.33	25	58.33	0	41.67	58.33	16.67	25
	Republican	0	0	100	100	0	0	100	0	0
	All	61.54	7.69	30.77	61.54	0	38.46	61.54	15.38	23.08
West	Democrat	88.89	0	11.11	77.78	0	22.22	77.78	0	22.22
	Republican	100	0	0	0	0	100	100	0	0
	All	90	0	10	70	0	30	80	0	20
Democrat		76	4	20	64	0	36	72	8	20
Republican		87.5	0	12.5	75	0	25	87.5	0	12.5

This voting pattern confirms middle Tennessee's opposition to the state amendment and affirms senators' commitment to voting independently.

The legislators had an opportunity to enfranchise women immediately when in 1917 they voted to allow women to participate in presidential and municipal elections. This measure passed the House by an even smaller majority than had the state suffrage amendment and relied more heavily on Republican support. All Republicans present voted to allow women's participation in presidential and municipal elections, while fewer than 50 percent of Democrats approved the measure (see Table 5). Phillips, the Republican from middle Tennessee who had opposed state suffrage, had been replaced by another Republican who now voted for presidential suffrage. All Republicans did not, however, support the measure. William L. Smith of Knox County opposed presidential suffrage, but rather than voting against the measure, he paired with a colleague who favored it. Consequently, the record shows both men as absentees so that their votes had no effect.³

The strongest opposition still came from middle Tennessee where more than 46 percent of the representatives voted against presidential suffrage. In contrast, fewer than 8 percent of representatives from east Tennessee and almost 13 percent from west Tennessee opposed the measure. This time, all the Shelby delegation present voted in favor. Not surprisingly, given Democratic strength in middle Tennessee, 48 percent of Democrats there voted against presidential suffrage. By comparison, 28 percent of eastern Democrats and 15 percent of western Democrats opposed the measure. Nevertheless, presidential suffrage earned a majority in the House.

Presidential and municipal suffrage failed in 1917 because the Senate voted against it. Since their approval would have actually allowed women to vote, the senators' vote may more accurately reflect their opinion than did that of the representatives. More than 66 percent of Democrats opposed presidential suffrage compared with 33 percent of Republicans (See Table 7). East and west Tennessee, which had not opposed the state suffrage amendment at all, now voted almost equally against presidential suffrage at 37 and 40 percent respectively. Middle Tennessee increased its opposition to almost 85 percent. One of the two eastern Democrats voted to give women presidential suffrage, but neither of the Democratic senators whose constituencies comprised counties in both east and middle Tennessee did so.

In the 1917 Senate, only east Tennessee elected any Republicans, which makes it difficult to determine differences between party and division. Although middle Tennessee's Democrats conspicuously opposed the measure, party also played a role because one middle Tennessee constituency elected a Democrat in 1917 to replace the Republican senator that had represented it in 1915. The new Democrat opposed presidential suffrage when his predecessor had previously voted for a state amendment. A Republican, however, also changed his mind and voted against presidential suffrage when he had favored a state amendment.

Table 7. Percentage of Senate votes on woman suffrage

		Presidential Suffrage 1917			Presidential Suffrage 1919			Support Speaker			19 th Amendment		
		aye	nay	ab	aye	nay	ab	aye	nay	ab	aye	nay	ab
East	Democrat	50	50	0	0	100	0	100	0	0	100	0	0
	Republican	50	33.33	16.67	71.43	28.57	0	85.71	14.29	0	85.71	14.29	0
	All	50	37.5	12.5	62.5	37.5	0	87.5	12.5	0	87.5	12.5	0
Middle/Democrat		15.38	84.62	0	46.155	46.155	7.69	69.23	23.08	7.69	69.23	15.385	15.385
West/Democrat		60	40	0	40	50	10	90	10	0	80	10	10
Democrat		33.33	66.67	0	46.155	46.155	7.69	80.77	15.38	3.85	73.08	11.54	15.38
Republican		50	33.33	16.67	71.43	28.57	0	85.71	14.29	0	85.71	14.29	0

*Includes one senator present but not voting

†Includes two senators present but not voting

The effect of party allegiance is, therefore, unclear. Much more significant is the level of support for presidential suffrage compared with the state suffrage amendment when the only difference between the two measures was that the latter would immediately allow women limited voting rights; whereas, a preliminary vote for a state amendment would have made no immediate impact and possibly never made any impact.

By the time that the House again voted on presidential suffrage in 1919, opposition had mounted further. On this occasion, more than 25 percent of Republicans opposed the measure as did more than 35 percent of Democrats (See Table 5). Middle Tennessee held firm in its opposition at 46 percent, while the east and west both increased their opposition to more than 22 percent of their representatives. Alexander Gaston Keisling, the only Republican with his entire constituency in middle Tennessee, voted against the measure. Democrats had previously held his constituency and had voted for a state suffrage amendment and against presidential suffrage. More than 66 percent of western Republicans joined him in opposition, which made their resistance proportionately stronger than that of eastern Democrats at 50 percent or middle Democrats at more than 44 percent. Western Democrats and eastern Republicans most strongly supported the measure at 70 percent and 59 percent respectively.

Hunt Phelan, a western Democrat, approved the measure because he valued his wife's assistance.⁴ In contrast, J. H. Rector, an eastern Republican, voted against the measure because women did not want to vote, mothers belonged at home, and the NWP pickets at the White House were "unbecoming."⁵ Only one member of the Shelby delegation was absent and one other, Frank Rice, voted "nay." Two constituencies

comprised counties in both east and middle Tennessee, and their vote split along party lines with the Republican member voting for and the Democratic member voting against enfranchising women. Representatives were, therefore, continuing to vote more by personal inclination than consistently by party or divisional interests. Despite the increased opposition, presidential and municipal suffrage for women again passed the House.

By contrast, opposition in the Senate had fallen (See Table 7). Fewer than 29 percent of Republicans now opposed a presidential suffrage law. Democrats, however, had changed their opinion; they now divided equally on the issue. Claude Clarke, a middle Tennessee Democrat, recorded himself as present but not voting. Still, support in the Senate varied; although opposition remained unchanged in east Tennessee, it grew to 50 percent in the west. Only 46 percent of senators from middle Tennessee, however, now opposed the measure. J. Parkes Worley, the eastern Democrat, remained opposed, but the two senators representing counties in both east and middle Tennessee now voted for the law. Passage by the Senate gave Tennessee women the right to vote in presidential and municipal elections. No obvious reason accounts for the senators' reconversion to women's enfranchisement. Less than two months later, however, the United States Senate voted for an amendment to the federal constitution giving women the right to vote. Tennessee's senators may, therefore, have decided to pre-empt that decision.

Tennessee's Senate was much more positive in its response to ratifying the Nineteenth Amendment than it had been to giving women presidential and municipal suffrage (See Table 7). Fewer than 12 percent of Democrats and 15 percent of

Republicans voted against ratification. East and west Tennessee only voted against ratification by 12.5 percent and 10 percent respectively. Candler, the only senator from east Tennessee voting against ratification, was a noted opponent of women's enfranchisement.⁶ Only 15 percent of senators from middle Tennessee now voted against the federal amendment. All three newly elected senators voted for ratification although their predecessors had opposed presidential suffrage. One of these, Frank Rice ran for reelection because he had voted against presidential suffrage and wanted an opportunity to correct his mistake.⁷

Seven other senators changed to a favorable vote. The one Republican among them, William Preston Monroe, decided to support his party on the issue.⁸ Four middle Democrats and two western Democrats changed their votes. Only Senator Whitby had predecessors who voted against all previous attempts to enfranchise women. John Harber's predecessors had supported every woman suffrage measure so he was simply returning to a previous stance. The others may, however, have exchanged votes for "patronage" as the antisuffragists alleged.⁹ Since they could all have voted against the amendment without affecting its passage, they may have simply thought it politically expedient to join the majority. All opposition had not, however, disappeared; some senators again raised concerns over states' rights.

Walter Cameron and James Rice continued to voice the same objections to federal amendments as they had over the Eighteenth Amendment.¹⁰ Rice was the only senator to support the 1919 presidential suffrage law but vote against ratification. Although Cameron had voted for presidential suffrage in 1919, he was absent in both 1917 and

1920. Two men with similar views could, therefore, react differently in practice. Other opponents of ratification show no evidence of opposition to all federal amendments. William Roots Miller had himself recorded as present but not voting, but he had voted to ratify the Eighteenth Amendment and twice voted against presidential suffrage. His opposition to suffrage, therefore, seems greater than his fear of federal intervention. Similarly, Lonsdale P. McFarland, of Wilson County, had voted against the 1919 presidential suffrage law but had supported the Eighteenth Amendment; he too declined to vote on the Nineteenth Amendment. These men may not have been the only opponents of woman suffrage because all those who voted to ratify the amendment may not have avidly supported the measure but may have expected their colleagues in the House to reject the amendment. Given the uncertainty of the outcome, however, they would have been taking a great risk in relying on the House.

By the time Tennessee's House came to vote on concurring with the Senate to ratify the Nineteenth Amendment, support had dwindled further, and opposition had again increased compared with earlier woman suffrage votes (See Table 5). The noticeable difference from the earlier votes, however, is the small number of absentees; only three representatives failed to appear. Campaigners on both sides of the issue, therefore, successfully persuaded their supporters to vote. Representatives also knew that their vote would decide the issue. Previously, the House had voted before the Senate so representatives always knew that the final decision would not be theirs. Predicting the outcome was a precarious matter for all concerned.

In the final vote, east and west Tennessee and the Republican Party increased their support for ratification compared with presidential suffrage. Fewer absentees, however, allowed opposition to increase also with 49 percent of Democrats and 39 percent of Republicans voting against the amendment. Opposition also increased in the east to almost 30 percent, and in the west to almost 26 percent. Middle Tennessee, however, vigorously opposed ratification by almost 72 percent where the only Republican joined 71 percent of Democrats thoroughly to defeat the measure in that division. Even the Republican whose constituency comprised counties in both east and middle Tennessee joined his Democratic counterpart in voting against ratification. Although eastern Democrats reduced their opposition to 20 percent, their Republican colleagues increased theirs to more than 28 percent. Western Democrats also increased their opposition to 22 percent. All divisions and both parties, therefore, expressed increased hostility to enfranchising women.

Apart from the Davidson County representatives, who voted as a bloc, twelve other representatives voted against ratification when they had voted for presidential suffrage the previous session. Two of these were from west Tennessee one of whom may have had states' rights concerns. William Everett Weldon, a Democrat, represented Carroll, Henry, and Weakley counties. His predecessor, Reynolds, had expressed local concerns when he voted for the primary election law. Nevertheless, both Henry's and Weakley's individual Democratic representatives also voted in favor, while Carroll County's Republican representative was absent.

Ernest Campbell Norvell, a Republican, represented a constituency that comprised counties in both east and middle Tennessee. He voted for presidential suffrage but voted against ratification. Three further representatives from east Tennessee also changed their stance on woman suffrage. John Edward Cassady, a Republican representing Knox and Loudon voted against ratification. He was the only Knox County representative to do so. Apart from admitting that he opposed woman suffrage, he also thought that it would increase the political power of urban areas at the expense of rural areas.¹¹ This concern had not apparently troubled him when considering women's votes in presidential elections, but the outcome of state elections affected him personally. Republican William Dunlap did not support ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment having voted for presidential suffrage as did Gilbreth. Catt accused the latter of accepting a bribe though why she singled him out for condemnation remains uncertain.

The remaining six men who failed to vote for ratification when they had supported presidential suffrage were all democrats from middle Tennessee. Unfortunately, they left no record of their reasons for changing their minds. Some may have done so because of pressure from their constituents. For instance, Maury County had two representatives, and in 1919 they voted opposite ways on presidential suffrage. William Russell had supported that measure, but when it came to ratification of the amendment he joined his colleague in opposition. Four of the six men had predecessors who had opposed at least one measure aimed at enfranchising women. These men may have been natural opponents of woman suffrage who hoped that giving women the

opportunity to vote in presidential elections would have obviated the necessity of instituting a federal amendment.

Conversely, five representatives changed their vote from "nay" to "aye" between the 1919 vote for presidential suffrage and ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment. Again, they have left few clues as to their reasons, but these men came from both parties and all three divisions. Two eastern Republicans, J. H. Rector and William Phillips changed their minds as did two middle Democrats, Pinkney Preston Fitzhugh and Sidney Forest Carr. Banks Turner, the western Democrat, memorably supported his party at the last moment.¹² Similarly, only one representative voted for ratification when none of his predecessors had supported women's enfranchisement. In east Tennessee, the Democratic representative from Sullivan County had always opposed enfranchising women, but the elections just before the special session allowed voters to elect T. A. Dodson, who favored the amendment. Sullivan County, therefore, voted to enfranchise women for the first time.

For suffragists, who were trying to predict the outcome of the campaign from representatives' earlier votes, these changes interfered with their assessments, and may have led to the allegations of fraud. Antisuffragists were more fortunate in gaining more supporters than they lost; however, they too would have found it difficult to forecast whether their new found friends would remain firm in their support.

Finally, a brief examination of the differences between the vote in the Senate to support the speaker's decision to consider the amendment, which is comparable to the House vote to table the amendment, shows that all the senators did not vote the same way

both times either (See Table 7). Yet nobody commented on their changes of opinion between the two votes. Although seven senators voted differently, four of them have received consideration in other contexts; therefore, only three are relevant to this discussion. Roy H. Parks voted to concur with the Speaker but voted against ratification. Whitby did the opposite; he did not want the amendment voted upon but then voted for it. Claude Clarke supported the Speaker but then was absent for the ratification vote. He had been present but had not voted on presidential suffrage. His predecessors had generally supported the state suffrage amendment and presidential suffrage. Parks and Whitby had both voted against presidential suffrage as had their predecessors who had usually been absent for the votes on the state suffrage amendment. The lack of protest about their changed votes shows that nobody expected that votes would remain exactly the same. Burn's vote only became significant because it resulted in ratification of the amendment, but he could not have known that more men would not also change their votes as had happened in the Senate.

In the light of these comparisons, Nina Pinckard's allegations that suffragists bribed two men who would have left town and not voted if she had agreed to pay more seem unlikely.¹³ Harry Burn's changed vote also seems far less dramatic. McMinn County representatives, including Candler in 1917, had always voted for woman suffrage. Further, the McMinn County senators had also supported woman suffrage until Candler's opposition in 1919. Burn's opposition would, therefore, have been far more conspicuous than was his support. Two votes on similar issues were never the same; therefore, Burn's voting differently between the motion to table and the final vote was common. Seth

Walker's constituency, Wilson County, had a much more varied record on the woman suffrage issue. It had two representatives and a senator all of whom had opposed a state suffrage amendment. In 1917, the representatives had split their vote over presidential suffrage while the senator had voted against it. Senator McFarland and Walker had voted for presidential suffrage in 1919, but the other representative, John Given Harris, had voted against the measure. As already noted, McFarland opposed ratification and recorded his vote as present but not voting. Walker also opposed the measure although he changed his vote to "aye." Harris was absent for the ratification vote. Again, this voting history suggests that Walker's 1919 vote, rather than his action in 1920, was the aberration.

Since legislators raised the question of the conflict between urban and rural interests, their votes are also worth considering based on the number of towns in each county. The 1920 census defined urban counties as those with more than 30 percent of their inhabitants living in towns with populations greater than 2500. Small urban counties had fewer than 30 percent of their inhabitants living in such towns. Rural counties were those having no urban areas at all.¹⁴ At first sight, it seems that urban rather than rural counties favored woman suffrage because only 40 percent of urban counties' representatives opposed the measure while more than 62 percent of rural counties' representatives did so (See Table 8). As ever, in Tennessee, however, the situation was more complicated than it first appears.

The level of opposition varied by division with middle Tennessee as usual providing formidable resistance. Since Davidson was the only urban county in middle

Tennessee, its delegation's strong vote against ratification means that middle Tennessee's urban area opposed woman suffrage by 100 percent. Fewer than 71 percent of its small urban counties, and 77 percent of its rural counties, voted against ratification. In middle Tennessee, therefore, the small urban counties offered the least opposition and the urban county the greatest opposition to women's enfranchisement.

Table 8. Percentage of counties voting against ratification

		House	Senate
Urban Counties	East	28.57	28.57
	Middle	100	0
	West	50	0
	All	40	20
Small Urban Counties	East	37.5	12.5
	Middle	70.57	11.76
	West	14.29	14.29
	All	50	12.5
Rural Counties	East	47.36	5.26
	Middle	77.27	18.18
	West	58.33	8.33
	All	62.26	11.32

In contrast, east Tennessee's rural counties' representatives voted most strongly against ratifying the amendment. Still, only 47 percent of them opposed the measure. East Tennessee's rural counties' representatives, therefore, offered less resistance to women's

enfranchisement than did any of their middle Tennessee colleagues. In east Tennessee, though, urban counties' representatives offered even less opposition than did rural ones. Fewer than 29 percent of urban counties' representatives and 38 percent of those from small urban counties voted against woman suffrage.

Similarly, representatives from west Tennessee's rural counties opposed woman suffrage more than did its urban or small urban ones. More than 58 percent of rural counties' representatives compared with 50 percent of urban ones voted against ratification. As in middle Tennessee, representatives from the small urban counties offered the least resistance to women's enfranchisement. In west Tennessee, however, only 14 percent of them voted against ratification. Generally, representatives from many rural counties opposed woman suffrage, but their colleagues from some urban and small urban counties offered even greater resistance. Further, neither of the two representatives who raised the question in the House represented rural counties; they each represented a small urban county.

The situation becomes even more confused if one considers the differences between the Senate and House vote. Senators representing urban counties supported ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment more than did their colleagues from rural or small urban counties. Nevertheless, 20 percent of senators from urban counties voted against ratification, while only 11 percent of senators from rural counties and fewer than 13 percent of those from small urban counties did so. Urban counties, therefore, also opposed ratification more strongly.

In east Tennessee, more than 28 percent of urban counties' senators and 12 percent of small urban counties' senators opposed woman suffrage, while only 5 percent of rural ones did so. Working from senate votes, therefore, gives a completely different picture from that supplied by the House votes in east Tennessee. Similarly, middle Tennessee's senators voted differently from their counterparts in the House. No urban senator voted against ratification, but senators representing almost 12 percent of small urban counties did so. From senate figures, then, rural counties offered the most resistance to women's enfranchisement in middle Tennessee where 18 percent of their senators voted against ratification.

In west Tennessee, senators from small urban counties most strongly opposed woman suffrage unlike their colleagues in the House who offered the least resistance. Although the senator voting against ratification represented the same small urban county whose representative had opposed woman suffrage, senators from urban and rural counties offered even less opposition. No senators from urban counties, and only 8 percent of those from rural counties, voted against woman suffrage. While the reasons for differences between the House and Senate and among the three divisions are far from clear, such variations show that the extent of a county's urbanization alone did not determine how its senators and representatives would vote.

Tennessee's legislators did not vote strictly for their party, division, or county. Instead, they made their decisions as individuals governed by personal preference and political perceptions. States' rights considerations, as an issue in and of itself, concerned only a minority of them, though some used it as an excuse for not supporting a measure

that they opposed. Of the new members elected especially for the special session, no senators and only two representatives voted against ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment. Although all the new members were Democrats, the electorate did not take the opportunity to choose men who opposed women's enfranchisement, which suggests some broad support for the measure. Difference between votes on a particular measure does not suggest that men accepted bribes but that they found political advantage in changing their vote. For instance, many men must have supported a state suffrage amendment in 1915 because they felt that their constituents approved of the measure otherwise they would have perceived no advantage in doing so. Strong opposition in 1917, however, shows that many legislators had no wish to enfranchise women; they probably did so in 1919 as a defense against the proposed federal amendment. The ratification vote was so close because men were evenly divided on their personal opinion as to the advantages of enfranchising women. Senators and representatives from the same county voted differently indicating that urbanization alone did not dictate support for or opposition to women's enfranchisement. Finally, no correlation exists between votes for woman suffrage and support for prohibition or progressive reforms. If men believed that women would help them in instituting reforms, they displayed no eagerness to receive that assistance from their wives and daughters.

ENDNOTES

1. *Chattanooga Times*, 11 August 1920, 4; *Chattanooga Times*, 6 August 1920, 4.
2. J. D. Green and Harry A. Wilson, *House Journal of the Fifty-Ninth General Assembly of the State of Tennessee which convened at Nashville, Monday, January 4, A.D. 1915* (Jackson, TN: McCowat-Mercer Printing Co., 1915), 309.
3. Green and Wilson, *House Journal 1917*, 190.
4. Green and Totty, *House Journal 1919*, 920.
5. *Ibid.*, 921.
6. *Knoxville Journal and Tribune*, 14 August 1920, 1.
7. *Knoxville Sentinel*, 4 August 1920, 4.
8. *Chattanooga Times*, 14 August 1920, 1.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Green and Totty, *House and Senate Journal 1920*, 294.
11. *Knoxville Sentinel*, 11 August 1920, 1; Green and Totty, *House and Senate Journal 1920*, 93.
12. *Chattanooga Times*, 23 August 1920, 2.
13. *Knoxville Journal and Tribune*, 25 August 1920, 1.
14. Lee, *Tennessee in Turmoil*, 159-60.

CONCLUSION

Ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment in Tennessee should not appear as a footnote to histories of the woman suffrage movement. Both suffragists and antisuffragists recognized that Tennessee was their last stand. Although North Carolina was considering the amendment concurrently with Tennessee, both sides fielded their strongest teams of organizers in the Volunteer State. Suffragists needed to win only one more state so the antisuffragists could never afford to lose another campaign. The antisuffragists had, however, recently won in Delaware, and if they also won in Tennessee, they had only to delay any further consideration until after the 1920 election to secure a new political climate. Both sides clearly believed that North Carolina would support the antisuffragists because neither side wasted their most experienced campaigners in that state. Florida also seemed a forgone conclusion, and Connecticut's and Vermont's governors both opposed the amendment. For the suffragists, therefore, Tennessee might offer their last opportunity to secure the right to vote before the 1920 elections and might even offer their last chance to ratify the amendment. After the election they would have less leverage with the national political parties. As always, in Tennessee, the suffragists chose the most favorable battleground, but the antisuffragists

chose the weapons by framing the debate around Tennessee's constitution rather than women's right to vote.

Opponents of woman suffrage used concerns for the state constitution as a smokescreen for their views. Although no election intervened between passage of the federal amendment and Tennessee's ratification, some legislators were elected before the special session. All thirteen of the men elected were Democrats, and eleven of them voted for the amendment. The two dissenting votes came from the House; none of the newly elected senators voted against the amendment. If Tennessee's electorate strongly opposed the federal amendment, therefore, it did not demonstrate its opposition in its choice of new legislators. Had the entire legislature been reelected based on those figures, only 15 percent of legislators would have opposed the amendment. The United States Supreme Court had ruled that the federal constitution took precedence, and Tennessee's Attorney General Frank Thompson confirmed that Tennessee could erect no barrier against its legislature considering the federal amendment. Nothing, therefore, prevented Tennessee's legislators ratifying except their wish to preclude women from voting.

Tennessee generally supported progressive reforms, and while one can argue about the merit or motivation of such reforms, legislators cannot have voted against woman suffrage out of fears that women would advocate such reforms since legislators had already enacted progressive legislation. Legislators denied women the right to vote simply because they did not want women to vote. Generally, this survey shows middle Tennessee as the most conservative division of the state as shown by its lack of commitment to progressive measures, its lack of support for state suffrage, and its

preference for prohibition. This conservatism raises questions about the source of southern conservatism which historians often attributed to racist concerns. Middle Tennessee did not, however, have a large black population. No counties there had a black population greater than 50 percent; most counties had less than 20 percent blacks. Instead, middle Tennessee seems to have been most concerned to retain power within the existing structure. Since middle Tennessee had a minority black population, it seems unlikely that its legislators opposed women's enfranchisement because of fears about blacks voting.

If race were the only concern, Tennessee could have enfranchised women to overcome black votes in the 1880s. Suffragists recognized that antisuffrage concerns about black voting rights were specious arguments. As white supremacists lured middle-class black women into believing that if they were clean, moral, and educated, they would not be segregated, so male antisuffragists lured women into believing that blacks voting provided the only obstacle in the path of women's enfranchisement. Nevertheless, the reasons given for segregation were as spurious as those given for depriving women of the ballot. If representatives supported the Eighteenth Amendment, they had no logical grounds for opposing the Nineteenth for states' rights reasons. Although some legislators exhibited genuine concerns for states' rights, they also protected local rights. Only two senators and three representatives were habitually concerned with states' rights. If that were the main reason for opposing woman suffrage, therefore, it would apply to few legislators. Further, in his call for the special session, Roberts had provided for a law to make women pay a poll tax. Breaking the quorum prevented the enactment of such

legislation. If race were a serious concern, legislators would have remained to enact the legislation necessary to keep black women from the polls.

Race was not an issue — to say that the South could not have prevented black women from voting in the same way that it had black men is another cloak to conceal the fact that black women did not receive the same protection as did white women. White men physically forced black women off trains; they would not have hesitated physically to prevent them from voting.¹

Tennessee had presidential suffrage, but full suffrage would allow women a voice in state affairs that presidential suffrage alone did not permit. Presidential suffrage was no threat to the political power structure in Tennessee, whereas full suffrage allowed women to choose state legislators and the governor. Possibly presidential suffrage was designed to satisfy women and keep them from believing that full participation was necessary. Men often said that women could vote in the 1920 election, which clouded the fact that they could not vote in state elections. Political parties feared that women would form their own parties and not be part of the existing system, which was very threatening especially in a climate where Bourbon Democrats had gained control but were not certain that they could hold on to it.² In the legislature, the first step toward a state suffrage amendment had less support than ratification of the Eighteenth Amendment. For politically powerful men, women's votes presented a more terrifying prospect than federal police having access to Tennesseans' homes.³

Women did not receive the franchise as a gift for their war work. They campaigned hard to win the right to vote. Both sides were very successful at getting

their supporters out to vote, but suffragists had a better organization. What prompted a demand for women's enfranchisement in Tennessee is harder to identify. Although historians have attributed women's gaining the right to vote to their educational and economic advances, such an explanation does not bear scrutiny in Tennessee.⁴ Too few women there benefitted from expanded opportunities to cause a groundswell of opinion favoring women's enfranchisement, and only a minority of Tennessee women was active in the suffrage movement. Rural women, however, supported the WCTU so they may have come to favor the ballot as an instrument for protecting the home. Rural areas generally favored prohibition as a means of regulating cities; therefore, their menfolk may well have supported their aspirations to vote. Tennesseans probably gave broad support to woman suffrage; otherwise their legislators would have had no reason to display their own support for the issue when they voted for a state suffrage amendment. Despite some suggestions during the debates that cities wanted to enfranchise women and rural areas did not, the evidence does not provide a clear answer. Some legislators from rural counties opposed woman suffrage, but some from urban areas also did so. Urbanization does not, however, provide a reliable guide to explain legislators' votes. A better explanation is that conflict between urban and rural counties drove legislators from all areas to consider enfranchising women as a way of reinforcing their own power. Personal antipathy to woman suffrage, however, prevented some legislators from seeing women's enfranchisement as a benefit. Conservative middle Tennessee, therefore, continued to oppose the measure.

Tennessee's factions rendered legislators' voting patterns unpredictable to suffragists and antisuffragists alike. Legislators did not vote consistently even on different progressive measures. They sometimes voted with their party and sometimes with their division, but if their party's view conflicted with that of their constituents, they voted as the latter wished.⁵ Representatives were not just concerned about their constituents, however. For instance, Percy Sharpe memorably cast his vote against ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment because the people of South Carolina did not want it ratified. Constituents themselves were not always predictable; issues were sometimes more important than party to voters in Tennessee. During the arguments on Prohibition, the electorate chose its legislators based on their prohibition stance rather than by their party affiliation. Throughout the Nineteenth Amendment campaign, the legislature was so finely balanced that nobody could predict the outcome because men had to decide whether their personal aversion to allowing women to vote would triumph over their perceived individual interests and political advantage.

Despite accusations that the governor did not support suffrage and his weak political position, his greatest power was in the senate, which strongly supported the amendment. As governor, Roberts had many appointments within his gift that he could use to attract support. Tennessee's governors needed such influence with legislators because they did not split on party lines.⁶ He, therefore, seems to have committed himself to the issue once he decided to call the special session. Men were not always clear which side they favored, which suggests that they were acting for their own political gain rather

than from a strong opinion on the issue. Reasonable explanations exist for Burn's and Walker's actions without resorting to bribery as a reason for their votes.

As to the role played by railroads and the liquor industry, they had no power by 1920 even if they did oppose women's enfranchisement. Although each side alleged that railroads and liquor dealers supported the other, there is no evidence that they influenced the outcome either way. Legislators reneged on their pledges, but in practice, few men voted unexpectedly. Moreover, changing their votes between measures was not an unusual occurrence. For instance, three legislative votes on the "bone dry" laws all varied. At ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, five representatives and six senators voted to ratify despite having voted against presidential suffrage with little explanation. Some of these men may have yielded to pressure from the governor, but whether they received anything in return is unknown. Even the heavily biased *Chattanooga Times* distinguished only Whitby among this group as succumbing to state patronage.⁷ Conversely, twelve representatives and no senators unexpectedly voted against ratification having supported presidential suffrage. Specific accusations were only made against Gilbreth, and Catt did not make those publicly. Although several senators voted differently on the last two votes concerning the amendment, and one voted exactly as did Burn, only the latter's vote raised a furor. Burn's altered vote was not, therefore, as unusual as antisuffragists pretended, they chose to dispute his vote because Daughtry's last-minute pleas provided fuel for the blaze of allegations.

Reading all the political rhetoric about Tennessee's constitution, states' rights, and outside influences, can easily lead one to support historians' contentions that woman

suffrage suffered strong opposition in the South because of its link to black suffrage and states' rights. Such a conclusion belittles sexism as a restraint on women's participation in politics. Some of Tennessee's legislators sincerely believed in states' rights, which they upheld regardless of the issue involved. Others, however, simply used such arguments to oppose any issue with which they disagreed knowing that those arguments resonated with their audience. They used similar arguments when discussing the relationship between local and state governments as they did between the state and federal government. Thus, they could avoid discussion of the issue in favor of easy rhetoric. The difference in voting patterns between the state amendment and presidential suffrage shows that sexism drove legislators to resist enfranchising women. Further, the continual denial that woman suffrage was the issue under consideration undermines its importance and remains a common ploy with those who oppose women's equality. In fact, there was only one issue at stake in Tennessee — that of woman suffrage. For women, however, the battle was "lost and won."⁸ Fortunately for us, the antisuffragists lost and suffragists won the "Verdun" in 1920.⁹

ENDNOTES

1. Kenneth W. Goings and Gerald L. Smith, "'Duty of the Hour': African American Communities in Memphis, 1962-1923," in *Tennessee History: The Land, the People, and the Culture*, ed. Carroll Van West (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1998), 232.
2. "On the Inside," 14 Feb 1920, Catt Papers; *Nashville Banner*, 28 August 1920, 5.
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