



HISTORIC RESOURCE STUDY
**BELMONT-PAUL WOMEN'S EQUALITY
NATIONAL MONUMENT**

Final Report January 2021

National Mall and Memorial Parks

HISTORIC RESOURCE STUDY
**BELMONT-PAUL WOMEN'S EQUALITY
NATIONAL MONUMENT**

WASHINGTON, DC



FINAL ❖ JANUARY 2021

Prepared by:

Quinn Evans
Washington, DC
Ann Arbor, MI

Under contract with
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As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally-owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering sound use of our land and water resources; protecting our fish, wildlife, and biological diversity; preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places; and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people by encouraging stewardship and citizen participation in their care. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.

U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Resource Stewardship and Science
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Cover Photo: Dedication of the NWP Headquarters, 1931 (Library of Congress).

Title Page: The Porter Dale House, later known as the Alva Belmont House and NWP Headquarters, 1928 (Historical Society of Washington).

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CLR	Cultural Landscape Report
CU	Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage
BEPA	Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument
EEOC	Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
ERA	Equal Rights Amendment
ERRC	Equal Rights Ratification Council
HRS	Historic Resource Study
HSR	Historic Structure Report
NAMA	National Mall and Memorial Parks
NAWSA	National American Woman Suffrage Association
NPS	National Park Service
NPS-NCA	National Park Service-National Capital Area
NWP	National Woman's Party
WPC	Woman's Party Corporation
WWP	World Woman's Party



PREFACE

Chapter title page: "When Tennessee the 36th state ratified, Aug. 19, 1920, Alice Paul, National chairman of the Woman's Party, unfurled the ratification banner ..." (Library of Congress).

PREFACE

On April 12, 2016, President Barack Obama designated the National Woman’s Party headquarters at 144 Constitution Avenue NE in Washington, DC, as the Belmont-Paul Women’s Equality National Monument. Led by visionary Alice Paul, the National Woman’s Party (NWP) played a ground breaking role in securing the passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment and women’s constitutional right to vote in 1919 and 1920, respectively. The following year, the NWP reorganized around the goal of passing an Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution. In 1929 the NWP acquired the property at 144 Constitution Avenue NE as its headquarters (Figure 1). The property became a staging ground for Alice Paul and NWP members to draft more than 600 pieces of legislation in support of equal rights and to advocate for women’s political, social, and economic equality, both in the United States and abroad. In 1943 Alice Paul wrote new language from the NWP’s headquarters for the Equal Rights Amendment and lobbied Congress extensively for its passage until her retirement in 1972. As the NWP’s headquarters for over 90 years, the Belmont-Paul Women’s Equality National Monument “serves as the physical manifestation of the women’s equality movement.”¹

According to the author of the National Historic Landmark nomination for the NWP headquarters (the Sewall-Belmont House), Alice Paul (1885-1977), founder of the NWP, “was the most significant figure in the final phase of the struggle for a constitutional amendment granting [American] women the right to vote.”² Born in 1885 to Quaker parents in Mount Laurel, New Jersey, Paul was well educated, with an undergraduate degree from Swarthmore College. She later studied at the New York School of Philanthropy (now Columbia University School of Social Work) and received a Master of Arts degree in sociology from the University of Pennsylvania in 1907. While in England to study social work from 1907 to 1910,

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- 1 National Park Service, Belmont-Paul Women’s Equality National Monument, Foundation Document (Washington, DC: National Park Service 2017), 9; The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, “Presidential Proclamation – Establishment of the Belmont-Paul Women’s Equality National Monument,” 12 April 2016, accessed at <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-pressoffice/2016/04/12/presidential-proclamation-establishment-belmont-paulwomens-equality>; National Woman’s Party, “Our Mission,” accessed at <https://www.nationalwomansparty.org/mission-1>.
 - 2 Carol Ann Poh, Sewall-Belmont House National Register of Historic Places Form (National Park Service, 1973), National Historic Landmark File, Sewall-Belmont House, National Archives and Records Administration, accessed at <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/117691869>.



Figure 1. Sewall-Belmont House (QE, 2019).

Paul joined the British suffrage movement with Emmeline Pankhurst, Pankhurst's daughters, and other women working to secure the vote for British women. During her time in England, Paul participated in meetings, demonstrations, and depositions to Parliament that led to multiple arrests, hunger strikes, and force feedings, which inspired her later work in the United States.

After returning to the United States and earning her PhD in sociology in 1912 from the University of Pennsylvania, Paul dedicated her life to women's suffrage. She became a member of the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) and by 1912 served as the chair of its Congressional Committee in Washington, DC. Along with fellow suffragist Lucy Burns, Paul created the Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage. Paul's and Burn's belief that the suffrage movement needed to concentrate on the passage of a federal suffrage amendment and not state-by-state amendments led to a disagreement with the NAWSA on tactics. In 1914 the Congressional Union broke ties with the NAWSA and evolved into the NWP by 1916.

Paul's strategy, adopted from her experience in Britain, was to "hold the party in power responsible."³ On March 3, 1913, the day before President Woodrow Wilson's inauguration, Paul organized a women's suffrage parade in Washington,

³ United States Congress, House, Committee on the Judiciary, Woman Suffrage: Hearings Before the Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives, Serial 11-Part , Sixty-fifth Congress, First Session (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1917), 184.

DC, with over 5,000 participants. Beginning in 1917 the NWP began a series of nonviolent protests to demand President Wilson and Congress to address women's suffrage. The NWP organized daily pickets in the form of "Silent Sentinels," women who stood outside the White House with banners displaying incendiary phrases directed at President Wilson. Many of these women, including Alice Paul, were attacked, arrested, and endured brutal prison conditions and force feedings. Newspaper headlines of Paul's and other NWP members' treatment garnered public sympathy and support for women's suffrage, and by 1918 Wilson announced his support.⁴ The United States House of Representatives passed the 19th Amendment on May 21, 1919, and the Senate followed two weeks later on June 4, 1919. On August 18, 1920, Tennessee became the 36th state to ratify the amendment, the final state needed for ratification.

After the passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment in 1919-1920, the NWP reorganized and shifted its focus to the Equal Rights Amendment. The NWP hoped to repeat its successful strategy of amending the United States Constitution, this time to achieve complete legal equality for women in the United States. Between 1923 and 1972, the NWP succeeded in introducing the ERA in every session of Congress. To accomplish the passage of the ERA, Alice Paul and the NWP participated in numerous interviews with members of Congress, secured congressional endorsements through the distribution of candidate pledge cards, secured presidential support, sponsored radio broadcasts, formed ad hoc legislative and congressional committees, testified at hearings before the House and Senate judiciary committees, and lobbied against opposition tactics that tried to minimize the effectiveness of the amendment, among other efforts.⁵ To support her work, Paul earned a Bachelor of Laws degree in 1922, a Master of Laws degree in 1927, and a Doctorate of Civil Law in 1928, all from Washington College of Law at American University.

In 1922 the NWP moved its headquarters to 25 First Street NE, known as the "Old Brick Capitol," to be closer to Congress where it could focus its national efforts on lobbying for laws that addressed women's political, economic, and social

4 The White House, "Presidential Proclamation," 12 April 2016, accessed at <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/04/12/presidential-proclamation-establishment-belmont-paul-womens-equality>; National Woman's Party, "Our Mission," accessed at <https://www.nationalwomansparty.org/mission-1>; Debra Michals, ed., "Alice Paul," National Women's History Museum, accessed at <https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/alice-paul>.

5 Thomas C. Pardo, ed., *The National Woman's Party Papers 1913-1974: A Guide to the Microfilm Collection* (Sanford, North Carolina: Microfilming Corporation of America), 2; National Park Service, "A New Home on Capitol Hill: Fighting for the Equal Rights Amendment," accessed 30 July 2020 at <https://www.nps.gov/teachers/classrooms/alicepaul-capitol-hill-era.htm>.

inequality and the passage of the ERA (see Figure 3). Not long after the building's dedication, the federal government threatened the property with condemnation for the construction of the United States Supreme Court Building. With the help of prominent suffragist, president of the NWP, and benefactor Alva Belmont, the NWP purchased the brick house at the corner of Constitution Avenue (then B Street) and Second Street NE in 1929 from Senator Porter Dale to serve as its headquarters. Only a few blocks from its previous headquarters, the NWP's new location also benefitted from its proximity to the Capitol and Congress. Belmont said of the new headquarters, "may it stand for years and years to come, telling of the work that the women of the United States have accomplished; the example we have given foreign nations; and our determination that they shall be—as ourselves—free citizens, recognized as the equals of men." Named the "Alva Belmont House" and later known as the Sewall-Belmont House, the house became the base for the NWP's advocacy for the Equal Rights Amendment and other significant domestic and international actions for women's equality.⁶

The Belmont House served as the nucleus of the NWP's efforts to secure equal rights for women. Following Paul's mantra of holding the party in power responsible, its location on Capitol Hill near the House and Senate buildings made it ideal for the organization's lobbying efforts. The property was not only the NWP's headquarters and the center of its political activism, but also served as a gathering place and community for women. As expressed by Leila J. Rupp in "The Women's Community in the National Woman's Party, 1945 to the 1960s," the Belmont House "created a female world for members of the Woman's Party when they came to Washington and served as a feminist space for all women who identified with the women's movement."⁷

In addition to the ERA, the NWP fought for the legal, social, and economic status of women, both in the United States and around the world. In 1938 Alice Paul formed the World Woman's Party, headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, which served as the National Woman's Party's international office for the promotion of equal rights for women worldwide. As part of the World Woman's Party, Alice Paul lobbied for the inclusion of equality provisions in the United Nations Charter and helped establish the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. During the 1920s and 1930s the NWP broadened women's rights on the state and local levels and from its headquarters drafted over 600 pieces of legislation aimed at equal rights for women including custody rights of children, jury service,

6 The White House, "Presidential Proclamation," 12 April 2016, accessed at <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/04/12/presidential-proclamation-establishment-belmont-paul-womens-equality>.

7 Leila J. Rupp, "The Women's Community in the National Woman's Party, 1945 to the 1960s," *Signs* 10, no. 4 (Summer 1985), 727.

property rights, divorce rights, estate administration, guardianship rights, and civil liability.⁸ These efforts resulted in over 300 legislative changes and included the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938.⁹

After returning to the United States in 1941, Paul continued her work in American women's issues and in 1943 rewrote the ERA, which then became known as the "Alice Paul Amendment." Through the efforts of Paul and the NWP, the Equal Rights Amendment was introduced in every session of Congress from 1923 until its passage in 1972.¹⁰ When the deadline for ratification arrived on June 30, 1982, the amendment needed three additional states to reach the required 38 for ratification. To date, the ERA has not yet been ratified.

Paul remained dedicated to fighting for women's equality for the rest of her life and succeeded in adding a sexual discrimination clause to Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. She helped lead the NWP from its headquarters at the Belmont House from 1929 until 1972, when she retired. Until she suffered a stroke in 1974, Paul continued to campaign for the Equal Rights Amendment and its ratification. Alice Paul died in 1977 at the age of 92. Paul once stated, "I never doubted that equal rights was the right direction. Most reforms, most problems are complicated. But to me there is nothing complicated about ordinary equality."¹¹

Threats to the Sewall-Belmont house by the construction of the Hart Senate Office Building in the late 1950s and 1960s led to the NWP headquarters' listing in the National Register of Historic Places in 1972 and its designation as a National Historic Landmark in 1974. In October 1974 Congress enacted PL 93-486, which designated the property a National Historic Site and authorized the Secretary of the Interior to enter into a cooperative agreement with the NWP for the property's restoration and maintenance. With dwindling membership and funds for the upkeep of the house, the NWP established the Woman's Party Corporation in 1977 as a means to protect its endowment, accept funds from the Department of the Interior, and finance its educational activities.

In 1997, following a lawsuit and the dissolution of the Woman's Party Corporation, the NWP ceased as a lobbying organization and became a nonprofit

8 Pardo, *The National Woman's Party Papers 1913-1974*, 2.

9 National Park Service, *Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument*, Foundation Document, 7.

10 Alice Paul Institute, "Alice Paul: Feminist, Suffragist, and Political Strategist," accessed at <https://www.alicepaul.org/who-was-alice-paul/>.

11 National Park Service, *Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument*, Foundation Document, 5; Alice Paul Institute, "Alice Paul: Feminist, Suffragist, and Political Strategist," accessed at <https://www.alicepaul.org/who-was-alice-paul/>.

educational organization that focused on telling the story of the NWP and the suffrage and equal rights movements, and advocating for women's political, social, and economic equality. In 2016 President Barack Obama designated the site as the Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument and part of the national park system. Today, the site continues to tell the story of the courageous activism by American women.¹²

PROJECT LOCATION

The Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument is located in the Capitol Hill neighborhood of Washington, DC (Figure 2). The site, which includes a house built in the nineteenth century and its adjacent garden, stands at the northeast end of the United States Capitol complex, immediately to the north of the United States Supreme Court building (Figure 3). The NPS manages the site as a part of the National Mall and Memorial Parks within Region 1 - National Capital Area of the National Park Service. The approximately 0.39 acre property is bounded on the south by Constitution Avenue NE, on the east by Second Street NE, and on the north and west by the Philip A. Hart Senate Office Building property. The property consists of three combined parcels within block 725 of the original grid of Washington, DC (Figure 4).

TERMINOLOGY

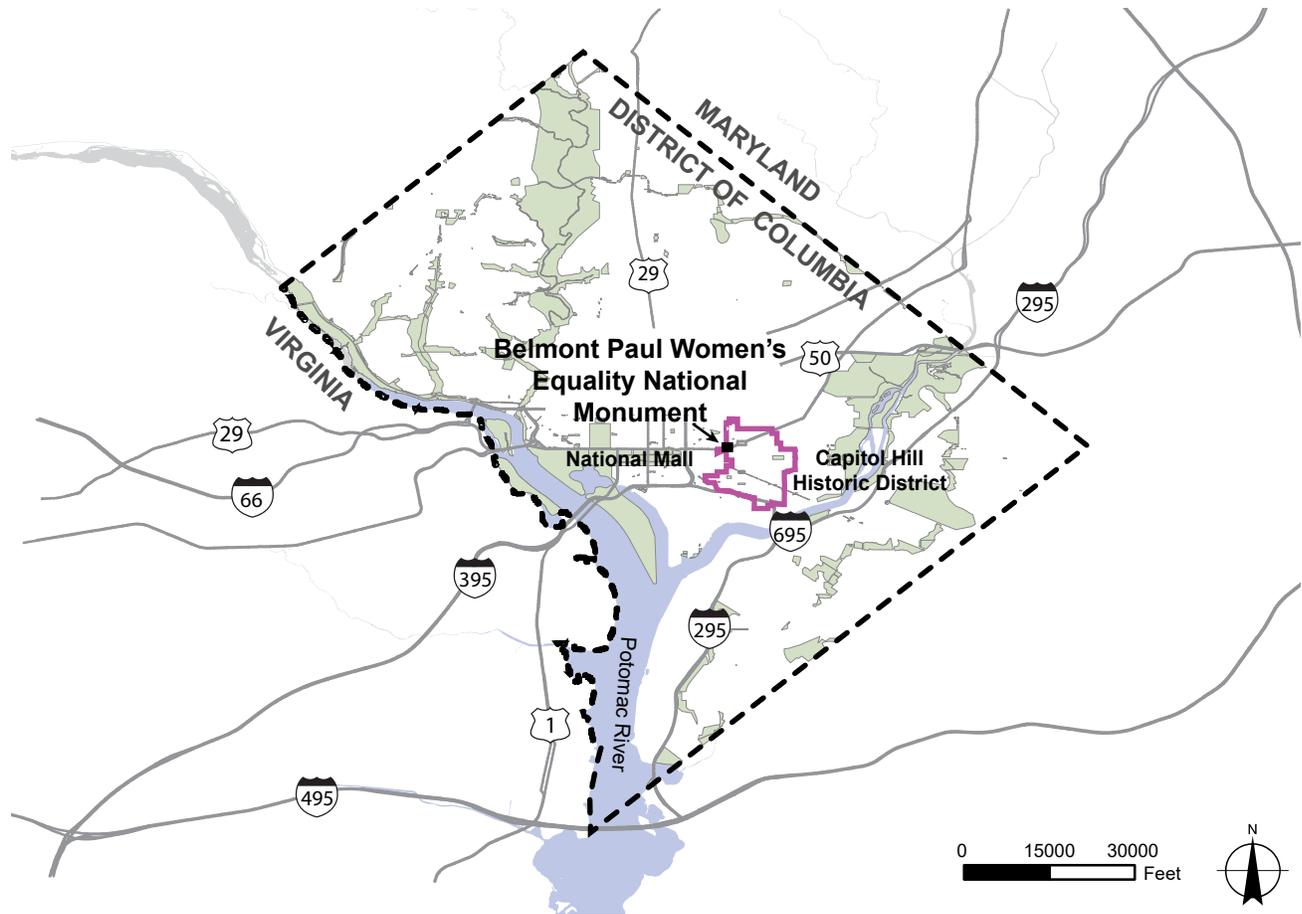
The property's name has changed several times since the NWP purchased it in 1929 (Table 1). In this Historic Resource Study, the property will be referred to by its name during the time that is being referenced. Other nomenclature, such as the use of the term "chairman" instead of "chairwoman," is based on usage in primary sources of the National Woman's Party.

Table 1. Naming conventions of the National Woman's Party Property

NAME	YEARS
1929-1972	Alva Belmont House
1972-1997	Sewall-Belmont House
1997-2016	Sewall-Belmont House and Museum
2016-present	Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument

12 The White House, "Presidential Proclamation," 12 April 2016, accessed at <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/04/12/presidential-proclamation-establishment-belmont-paul-womens-equality>.

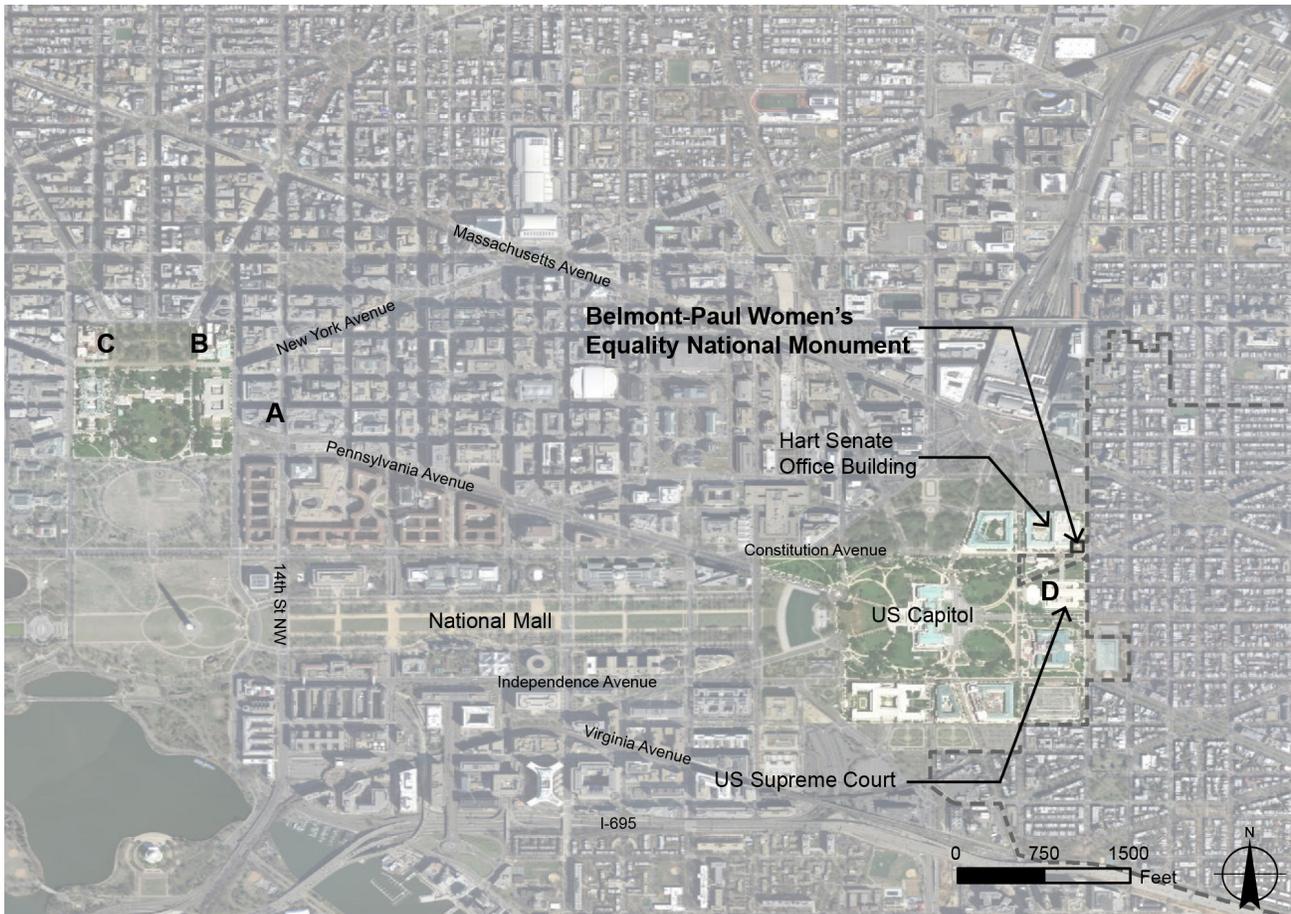
Figure 2. Regional location of Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument.



Legend

- Historic District Boundary
- District of Columbia Boundary
- Major Road or Highway
- National Park Service Land
- Water Body

Figure 3. City Location of Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument.



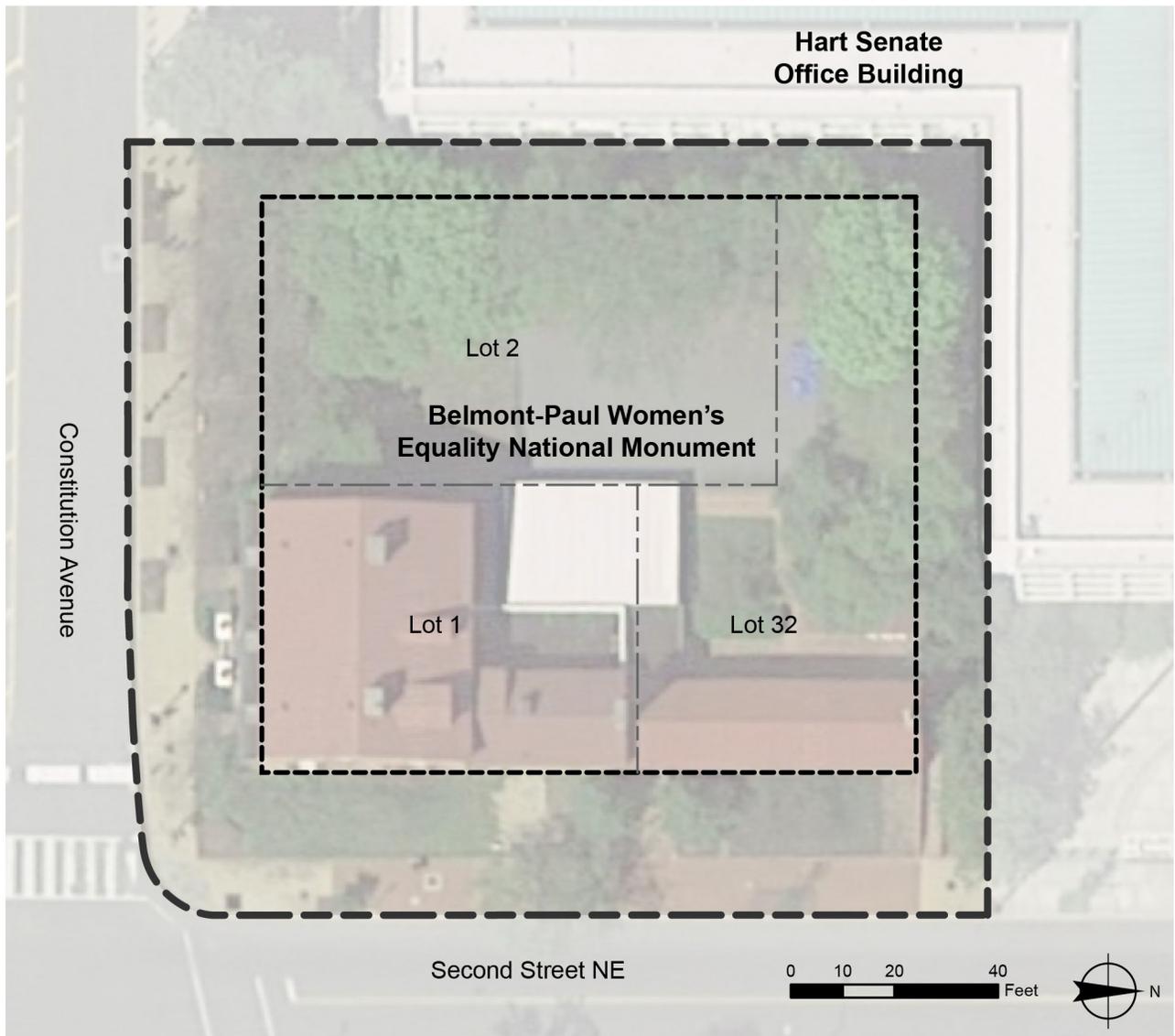
Legend

- Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument Property Boundary
- - - - - Capitol Hill Historic District

Previous National Woman's Party Headquarters

- A** 1420 F St NW, Founding - 1916
- B** "Cameron House" 21 Madison Place, 1916 - 1918
- C** 14 Jackson Place, 1918 - 1920
- D** "Old Brick Capitol" 21-25 First Street NE, 1920 - 1929

Figure 4. Study Area Boundary.



Legend

- Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument Property Boundary
- Study Area Boundary
- Lot Line

SCOPE OF WORK

The purpose of this project is to complete a Historic Resource Study (HRS) and baseline documentation for the Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument and the suffrage movement of the early twentieth century in the Washington, DC, region. Ultimately, the objective of this Historic Resource Study is to increase public awareness as part of the centennial of the ratification of the 19th Amendment in 2020 and update and develop historical contexts and interpretive themes to enhance the visitor experience; expand the accessibility of baseline documentation to park staff, visitors, researchers, and educators; assist in future planning efforts; and meet NPS responsibilities under Section 106 and 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

RESEARCH GOALS

The goals of the Historic Resource Study are to:

1. Describe the history of the founding of the National Woman's Party in 1916, through the struggles for suffrage and the passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment, until 1929, when the NWP purchased the Sewall-Belmont House, focusing on events and people in Washington, DC.
2. Discuss the history of the Sewall-Belmont House from 1929 to the present, and include a chronology of this history.
3. Include the role of African American (and other minority) women in the struggle for equal rights, concentrating on events and people in Washington, DC.
4. Discuss the voting experiences of women in the Washington, DC, area after the passage of the 19th Amendment. Specifically explore when women actually started exercising the right to vote and if there were differences in their experiences in DC, Maryland, and Virginia.

METHODOLOGY

The NPS-National Capital Area (NPS-NCA) and National Mall and Memorial Parks (NAMA) staff prepared the scope of work for this Historic Resource Study. NPS-NCA technical staff, NAMA staff, Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument staff, and Quinn Evans staff met on site on November 6, 2019, for a kick-off meeting and site tour. During this meeting, the team identified project goals, refined the scope of work, and discussed the research process and records sources.

The NPS provided government-furnished data including reports, studies, graphics, and AutoCAD and GIS files produced by the NPS-NCA-RESS-CR Program. Quinn Evans historians Patti Kuhn Babin and Ruth E. Mills conducted research in the National Woman's Party collection at the Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument in November 2019 and February 2020. This research included photograph and textual records as well as copies of the NWP publication *Equal Rights*. At the time of this research, the NWP was preparing to transfer the remainder of its collection to the Library of Congress. As such, all citations of these records refer to their location at the time of this research.

This research was supplemented by the National Woman's Party's records at the Library of Congress and other secondary sources. Additional primary research included photographic research at the Historical Society of Washington, DC, and historic newspaper digital archives.

The completion of this Historic Resource Study coincided with the outbreak of the 2019 Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and the temporary closure of many research institutions, including the Library of Congress, which houses the National Woman's Party collection. Consequently, the project team had limited access to these records.



CHAPTER 1

THE NATIONAL WOMAN'S PARTY AND THE 19TH AMENDMENT

1916-1920

Chapter title page: National Woman's Party Activists watch Alice Paul sew a star onto the NWP Ratification Flag, 1919-1920 (Library of Congress).

CHAPTER 1: THE NATIONAL WOMAN'S PARTY AND THE 19TH AMENDMENT, 1916-1920

This chapter summarizes the establishment of the National Woman's Party and its efforts to secure the passage of the 19th Amendment. It concludes with a brief exploration of women's experiences in voting or attempting to vote after the ratification of the 19th Amendment. Since all residents of the District of Columbia were disenfranchised until 1961 because of residency within the federal district, this section will primarily focus on experiences in Maryland, Virginia, and general information about women's experiences across the country.

THE SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT PRIOR TO 1913

When Alice Paul and Lucy Burns formed the precursor of the National Woman's Party in 1913, the women's suffrage movement was already at least 65 years old. In July 1848, women's rights activists met at the Seneca Falls Convention to advocate for the social, civil, and religious rights of women. At the time, women were unequal in many aspects of American life, including the right to own land, control their own finances, retain custody of their children, have equal access to education and employment, and participate freely in public life, including voting. At the meeting, considered the first major women's rights convention in the United States, Elizabeth Cady Stanton drafted a "Declaration of Sentiments" with 11 resolutions enumerating women's demands for equality. Of those resolutions, the ninth, calling on women to "secure to themselves their sacred right to the elective franchise," was the most controversial and the only resolution to not pass unanimously, although Stanton considered it as key to the convention's other demands. To many at the convention, the idea of equal suffrage was too radical.¹ During this period, the women's rights movement was closely allied with the cause of abolition, and free Black women and men often worked alongside White activists in both movements. Black women were among the leaders who spoke at women's rights conventions in the 1850s and 1860s.

The issue of women's suffrage was renewed in the wake of the Civil War during the debate over the enfranchisement of Black men, many of whom had recently been freed from slavery. Some White women's rights activists opposed the

¹ Christine Lunardini, "From Equal Suffrage to Equal Rights: The National Woman's Party, 1913-1923," PhD diss. (Princeton University, 1981), 2.



Figure 1-1. Lucy Stone, ca. 1850 (Library of Congress).



Figure 1-2. Elizabeth Cady Stanton (l) and Susan B. Anthony (r), ca. 1890 (Library of Congress).

enfranchisement of Black men at the expense of women, believing it would set back their cause. Black women were often divided on the issue, with some seeing race as more important than sex. The 15th Amendment, ratified in February 1870, granted the vote only to Black men.

In the aftermath of the bitter debate over the 15th Amendment, the women's suffrage movement split into two rival organizations. The American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA), led by reformer Lucy Stone (Figure 1-1), supported the 15th Amendment and focused on securing suffrage in individual states. The National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA), led by Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton (Figure 1-2) who had both opposed limiting the 15th Amendment to Black men, took a broader approach to advocating for women's rights, while recognizing that the vote remained of primary importance.² Despite the rifts that had formed between White and Black women suffrage activists during the debate over the 15th Amendment, Black women joined both the AWSA and the NWSA, as well as worked independently to secure voting rights for all women.

The AWSA's strategy resulted in some early victories. Following the defeat of the first state suffrage referendum in Kansas in 1867, the then-territory of Wyoming was the first to enfranchise women, in 1869, followed soon after by Utah in 1870. The same year, a hearing was held in the Congressional Committee on the District of Columbia on a bill that would extend the vote to women in the District. The measure was blocked by the Supreme Court's decision in *Minor v Happersett* that decided suffrage was not co-extensive with citizenship.³ Nevertheless, 70 women attempted to register to vote in the District of Columbia in 1871 and 1872, including Mary Ann Shadd Cary, the first Black woman newspaper editor in North America.⁴

While the first woman suffrage amendment was introduced to Congress in 1868, it was the so-called "Anthony Amendment" (named for Susan B. Anthony) in 1878 that established the language used without change until the passage of the 19th Amendment: "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on the account of sex." In 1882, Select Committees on Woman Suffrage were established in both houses of Congress. The Anthony Amendment was reintroduced in every session of Congress until 1896. The federal amendment lacked widespread support from

2 Eleanor Flexner and Ellen Fitzpatrick, *Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States*, Enlarged Edition, 3rd Revised edition (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press: An Imprint of Harvard University Press, 1996), 156.

3 Flexner and Fitzpatrick, *Century of Struggle*, 172.

4 Flexner and Fitzpatrick, *Century of Struggle*, 168.

male legislators, many of whom argued that women were either not intelligent enough to vote or that granting them the right to vote would create discord in the home. Southern congressmen also opposed the amendment on the basis that it would enfranchise Black women.

Despite the lack of progress on a federal amendment, suffragists made important gains in the late nineteenth century, developing networks and gaining political experience. Minor victories included enfranchisement for school and municipal elections, as well as full voting rights in the territories of Washington (1883) and Montana (1887). Wyoming's enfranchisement of women was a point of contention during the debate over admitting it as a state in 1889-1890; when it was admitted in 1890, it was the first state to guarantee full voting rights to women.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, American women made significant changes in their lives that would lay the groundwork for a more vigorous and successful pursuit of equal rights. Women entered the workforce and college in increasing numbers. College-educated women were less likely to marry and tended to have fewer children when they did. Many entered the professions, particularly teaching, law, education, and social work. As a result, many women had more control over their lives, more time to devote to work outside the context of the family, and greater exposure to public life.

Many women devoted this time and skill to social reform. Black women organized to advocate for civil rights, self-determination, and economic and social equality denied to most Black people by segregation and disinvestment. Women like Ida B. Wells-Barnett documented and fought against lynching, while other Black women formed clubs to improve health and economic conditions in their cities and regions. Many of these clubs formed national associations to share resources and tactics. In Washington, DC, a group of Black women organized the Colored Women's League (CWL) of Washington in 1892, under the leadership of Helen A. Cook. In 1896, the CWL merged with the National Federation of Afro-American Women to form the National Association of Colored Women (NACW), with Mary Church Terrell (Figure 1-4) as its first president.

The reform work of the NACW included advocating for Black women's suffrage. The NACW worked through the Equal Suffrage League, organized in the 1880s by Sarah Garnet of Brooklyn and her sister, Dr. Susan Smith McKinney Steward, to mobilize support for suffrage from Black women's clubs.⁵ Suffrage clubs organized around the country by Black women gathered petitions, worked on political



Figure 1-3. A young Black girl holds a "Votes for Women" banner (*The Crisis* (NAACP), September 1912, 240).

⁵ Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, *African American Women in the Struggle for the Vote, 1950-1920* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998), 94.



Figure 1-4. Mary Church Terrell, ca. 1880-1890 (Library of Congress).

campaigns, and educated potential voters, while Black women wrote speeches and articles supporting enfranchisement.

Although some individuals and groups worked with White women's organizations, in practice Black women were increasingly excluded from these organizations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin, a leading Black suffragist and editor of *The Woman's Era*, the first newspaper published by and for Black women, criticized the exclusion of Black women from the White women's movement or their relegation to segregated auxiliaries. Anna J. Cooper, a distinguished teacher and activist in Washington,

DC, critiqued White suffragists for their blindness to the contrast between White and Black women's lived experiences.⁶

Both in pursuing independent lives and in advocating for equal suffrage, women in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were challenging traditional gender roles and norms, particularly those that existed for middle-class women. This was often used against them by anti-suffragists, who claimed such women were acting inappropriately or were "mannish." Some women responded by emphasizing their femininity, while others embraced the label. In challenging gender roles, many women also made space to establish same-sex relationships with other women. Because women's intimate relationships with other women existed on a continuum, and non-heterosexual relationships were taboo, it is difficult to definitively identify these women as lesbian or bisexual. What remains clear, however, is that within the suffrage movement, women's political work often provided space for gender non-conforming women to develop supportive emotional connections that may have included couple relationships. Among the gender non-conforming women of the suffrage movement in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were Susan B. Anthony, Anna Howard Shaw, and Carrie Chapman Catt.⁷

The NWSA and the AWSA merged in 1890 to create the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA). Despite this unification of the two major suffrage organizations, there remained significant discord in the movement. A few Black women, such as Mary Church Terrell and Coralie Franklin Cook, belonged to the inner circles of NAWSA, accepted in part by NAWSA's White hierarchy because they were educated, professional, and middle class, "the image of the 'intelligent' women [Elizabeth Cady] Stanton had hoped to see enfranchised." Cook was invited to represent Black women at NAWSA's celebration of Susan B. Anthony's 80th birthday in 1900, where she took the opportunity to gently remind the audience that "no woman and no class of women can be degraded and all woman kind not suffer thereby."⁸ Nevertheless, the organization's White leaders often found it expedient to sacrifice the interests and dignity of Black women in an attempt to garner support from White southerners. Middle- and working-class women were increasingly interacting in the sphere of social reform, particularly in the settlement house movement. However, working-class women, many of them

6 Ashley R. Council, "Black Women, Race, and Female Enfranchisement: An Interpreter Reference Guide for the Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument," Draft Report, 2017, 13.

7 See Lillian Faderman, *To Believe in Women: What Lesbians Have Done for America - A History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999); and Leila J. Rupp, "'Imagine My Surprise': Women's Relationships in Historical Perspective," in *Classics in Lesbian Studies*, Esther D. Rothblum, ed. (New York: Routledge, 2013).

8 Terborg-Penn, *African American Women in the Struggle for the Vote*, 69.



Figure 1-5. NAWSA Officers and State Branch Presidents, 1892 (C. C. Catt Albums, Bryn Mawr College Library).

immigrants, sometimes clashed with the more privileged and conservative middle-class women who controlled the organizations.⁹

Within NAWSA, there were also continued debates over the best strategy to achieve suffrage, despite the merger, with many still favoring a state-by-state strategy rather than a federal amendment. Perhaps as a result, no federal amendment was introduced in Congress from the mid-1890s until 1913. The state route, however, was not much more successful; between 1896 and 1910, no state granted women suffrage. Indeed, by the early 1900s, to many it appeared that the movement was stalling. In the aftermath of the merger, some of the original leaders of the movement, including Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucy Stone, had withdrawn, succeeded by new activists such as Carrie Chapman Catt and Anna Howard Shaw (Susan B. Anthony died in 1906). When Harriot Stanton Blatch (Figure 1-6), daughter of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, returned from a twenty year sojourn in England in 1902, she found NAWSA moribund, with little political savvy and focused on incremental education efforts. The organization did not even have a national headquarters.



Figure 1-6. Harriot Stanton Blatch, ca. 1915-1920 (Library of Congress).

⁹ Flexner and Fitzpatrick, *Century of Struggle*, 222-226; Lunardini, “From Equal Suffrage to Equal Rights,” 9-18.

In England, Blatch had briefly been a member of the Women's Franchise League, organized in 1889 at the home of Emmeline Pankhurst. While the WFL was too radical for Blatch (she resigned after the first year), she was influenced by the direct action approach advocated by the British suffrage movement. Blatch organized the Equality League of Self-Supporting Women, later the Women's Political Union, in New York in 1907, and initiated a series of suffrage parades in New York beginning in 1910. The parades quickly drew attention, especially through the participation of prominent society women such as Alva Belmont. This helped to reinvigorate the suffrage movement, and several states, including Washington, Arizona, Kansas, Oregon, and California, passed suffrage referendums from 1910 to 1912 (votes were also held in Ohio, Wisconsin, and Michigan, but were defeated).

ALICE PAUL AND THE ROAD TO THE NATIONAL WOMAN'S PARTY, 1913-1916

Despite steps to revitalize the movement in the early 1910s, the effort to pass a federal suffrage amendment was virtually dead. The Anthony Amendment had not been debated in the Senate since 1887, and never in the House. There had been no favorable committee report since 1893, and the amendment had not been introduced in Congress since 1896.¹⁰ Many of the younger generation of suffragists were impatient with the older, slower, state-by-state strategy still being pursued by NAWSA. Among them were two young women who, like Harriot Stanton Blatch 10 years earlier, had recently returned from England where they had been influenced by the militant approach of the British suffragists. Their names were Alice Paul and Lucy Burns.

Alice Paul (Figure 1-7) was born in Mount Laurel, New Jersey, on January 11, 1885, in a Quaker family. Her parents were both advocates for women's suffrage, and as a child Alice had attended suffrage meetings with her mother. She attended Swarthmore College, at the time a Quaker institution that was among the first coeducational colleges in the country, where she initially studied biology, but developed an interest in political science and economics in her senior year. After graduating from Swarthmore in 1905 with a degree in biology, she completed a year-long fellowship at a settlement house in New York City, then entered graduate school at the University of Pennsylvania, where she studied sociology, political science, and economy. She earned a master's degree in sociology in 1907, and a Ph.D. in sociology from the same institution in 1912.



Figure 1-7. Alice Paul, 1915 (Library of Congress).

¹⁰ Flexner and Fitzpatrick, *Century of Struggle*, 271.



Figure 1-8. Lucy Burns, 1913
(Library of Congress).

After earning her master's degree, Alice Paul took a fellowship at the University of Birmingham in England in the fall of 1907. There she heard British suffragist Christabel Pankhurst speak, and became a “heart and soul” convert to the suffrage movement.¹¹ The following year, she moved to London and began working for the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), the suffrage organization founded by Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughters, Christabel, Adela, and Sylvia. While there, she met another American who had been converted to the cause, Lucy Burns.

Burns (Figure 1-8) was born in Brooklyn, New York, on July 28, 1879, to an Irish Catholic family. Like Alice Paul's family, Lucy's parents were also proponents of equal rights for women and introduced her to the cause at a young age. She studied English, economics, and languages at Vassar College, graduating in 1902. For the next several years, she alternated between graduate studies and teaching, both in the United States and abroad in Germany and at Oxford University in England. Burns was also inspired by meeting Emmeline Pankhurst to join the Women's Social and Political Union, serving as an organizer for the WSPU in Scotland from 1910 to 1912.¹²

Paul's and Burns' apprenticeship in the British movement was influential in their later careers as American suffragists. By 1903, when the WSPU was founded, Pankhurst had grown frustrated with the slow-moving, gradual tactics of the British suffrage movement and formed the WSPU to pursue more direct action. “Deeds, not words” was the organization's motto, and it focused solely on obtaining the vote. It organized rallies, published a newsletter, and conducted loud protests outside Parliament to demand passage of a women's suffrage bill. The organization's tactics grew increasingly militant as politicians delayed, and members were arrested when they tried to deliver protest petitions. By the early 1910s, members of the WSPU engaged in more violent actions, including smashing windows, setting small fires, and other property damage. Members who were arrested went on hunger strikes and were force-fed by prison officials.

Both Paul and Burns participated in some of these activities and were arrested several times. In fact, they met at a London police station, where they discovered a mutual frustration with the progress of the suffrage movement in the United States. In one incident, Alice Paul threw rocks at the London Guildhall windows to provide a distraction while Lucy Burns snuck inside to confront Winston

11 Mary Walton, *A Woman's Crusade: Alice Paul and the Battle for the Ballot* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 11-13.

12 “Lucy Burns,” Vassar College Encyclopedia, <http://vcencyclopedia.vassar.edu/alumni/lucy-burns.html>, accessed June 5, 2020.



Figure 1-9. The NAWSA office at 1420 F Street NW, ca. 1912 (Library of Congress).

Churchill, then a Member of Parliament.¹³ Both were sentenced to prison and took part in hunger strikes.

Alice Paul returned to the United States in 1910, where she shared her experiences and insights on the WSPU's approach at NAWSA's annual convention. In her remarks, she stated that the WSPU was not engaged in a "war of women against men...but of women and men together against politicians," identifying politicians as the enemy and militancy as the tactic to gain results. Although her address was well received, most of her audience believed that such militancy was unnecessary in the United States, where the American people were more reasonable, and the organization had the state-by-state strategy to fall back on.¹⁴ When Lucy Burns returned to the United States in 1912, she and Alice Paul began formulating a new approach to advancing the suffrage movement: applying British tactics to pressure American politicians to pass a federal suffrage amendment.

Initially, Burns and Paul attempted to work within the NAWSA framework. They formed a Congressional Committee of NAWSA in 1912 to concentrate on passing a federal suffrage amendment, and recruited other like-minded activists, including Burns' Vassar classmate Crystal Eastman, Mary Ritter Beard, and Dora Kelley Lewis. Working out of the basement of NAWSA's little-used Washington, DC, office at 1420 F Street NW (Figure 1-9), the Committee began raising money to hold its first major event, a suffrage march through the streets of DC.¹⁵

13 "Two Americans in Guildhall Exploit," *New York Times*, November 12, 1909.

14 Lunardini, "From Equal Suffrage to Equal Rights," 37-38.

15 1420 F Street NW was demolished in 1917.

How Thousands of Women Parade To-day at Capital.
SUFFRAGE MARCH LINE

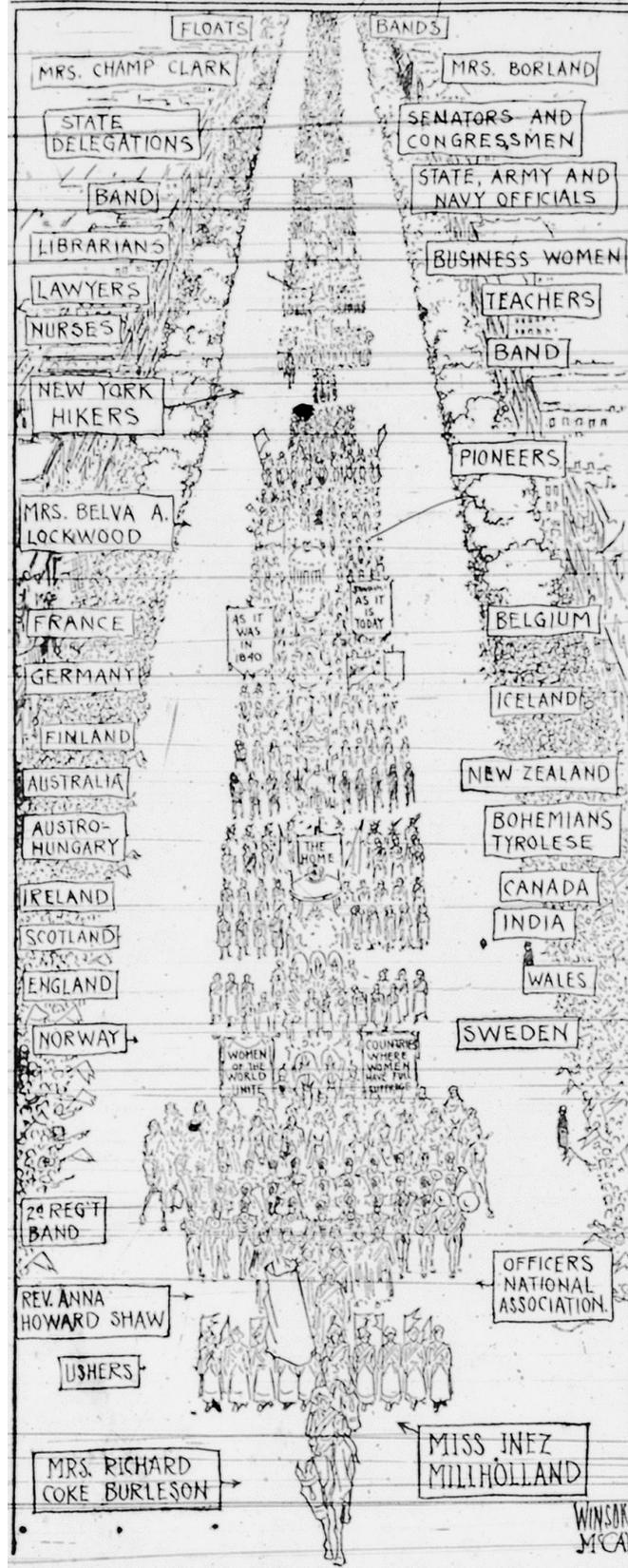


Figure 1-10. A diagram of the line of march for the 1913 suffrage parade (Library of Congress).



Figure 1-11. Inez Milholland at the 1913 parade (Library of Congress).

Paul and Burns' strategy centered on applying pressure to the "party in power." They believed that holding the entire party accountable for its lack of action on a federal amendment would force pro-suffrage legislators to exert influence on their neutral or opposed colleagues.¹⁶ As the Democrats were the party in power at that time, the Committee tactically planned the march for the day before the inauguration of Democratic President Woodrow Wilson, March 3, 1913. This also took advantage of a potentially large audience that would already be in the city for Wilson's inauguration. The march drew over 8,000 participants, including 26 floats, 10 bands, 5 cavalry squadrons, and 6 chariots. Leading the march down Pennsylvania Avenue toward the White House was Committee member Inez Milholland, riding a white horse and wearing a crown and a long white cape (Figure 1-11), alongside Grand Marshal Mrs. Richard Coke Burleson. Behind them were the officers of NAWSA, followed by waves of marchers organized in six themed sections: (Figure 1-10)

- "Women of the World Unite" featuring representatives of twenty nations;
- The fight for women's suffrage, with two floats illustrating past and present effort and a troop of women cavalry;
- Women at work in the home, education, service, and workforce, including college women, writers, artists, musicians, doctors, lawyers, etc. Marie Louise Bottineau Baldwin, a member of the Metis Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa and a lawyer, marched with White female lawyers;
- Women in government and civil service jobs;
- Women who didn't fit other categories;
- State delegations.

¹⁶ Lunardini, "From Equal Suffrage to Equal Rights," 40-41.



Figure 1-12. Ida B. Wells-Barnett, center, with the Chicago delegation (Chicago Daily Tribune).

The organization of the 1913 parade demonstrated the continued and worsening marginalization of Black women in the suffrage movement. From the beginning, their work—organizing suffrage clubs, writing and speaking in support of the cause, and participating in rallies and demonstrations—was integral to the movement. Unsurprisingly, Black women wanted to participate in the march. When first approached, Paul agreed, hoping to quietly tuck a few Black women among friendly northern delegations. As the date for the parade drew closer, however, Paul was increasingly caught between the growing inquiries from Black women and her fear that permitting Black women to march alongside White delegations would further inflame racist tensions in the city and alienate southern White women from participating. Paul hoped to solve the problem by keeping the controversy out of the newspaper and segregating Black women to a section at the rear of the parade. She later claimed she wanted to place Black women between two men's groups in an attempt to protect them from harassment.¹⁷

It is unclear if any Black women actually marched in a segregated section. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in its journal *The Crisis* identified around 40 Black women who participated in the march, including the banner carriers for the Michigan and New York delegations and 25 Howard University students, who marched behind the White college delegations. Perhaps the most famous story regarding the participation of Black women in the parade was that of anti-lynching activist Ida B. Wells-Barnett. Wells-Barnett was reportedly told she could not march with the White Illinois delegation and would have to join a segregated group. She waited at the side of the march

¹⁷ Walton, *A Woman's Crusade*, 63-64; Alice Paul interview cited in Lunardini, "From Equal Suffrage to Equal Rights," 69.

until the Chicago delegation passed and then stepped into the line with fellow suffragists from her state (Figure 1-12).¹⁸

The Crisis viewed Black women's participation in the march in a positive light, writing that "In spite of the apparent reluctance of the local suffrage committee to encourage the colored women to participate, and in spite of the conflicting rumors that were circulated and which disheartened many of the colored women from taking part, they are to be congratulated that so many of them had the courage of their convictions and that they made such an admirable showing in the first great national parade."¹⁹ Nevertheless, as Mary Walton has observed, Paul's "failure to unreservedly welcome black marchers left a permanent stain on her reputation."²⁰ It also left many Black suffrage activists deeply suspicious of Paul's commitment to suffrage for all women. Mary Church Terrell, who also marched in the parade, later told Walter White of the NAACP that she believed that Paul and her fellow White suffrage leaders would pass the federal amendment without giving Black women the vote if they could.²¹

Over half a million people were estimated to have watched the march, a major crowd for the day. Hostile spectators threw objects at the marchers and pushed into the parade, and the police did little to stop them. The women had to fight their way through the hostile crowds until the Army's Fifteenth Cavalry, stationed at nearby Fort Myer, arrived to restore order. President-elect Wilson, on arriving in DC that day, was said to have asked where everyone was, only to be told they were watching the suffrage parade.

The March 1913 suffrage parade was a tremendous success in terms of publicity for the Committee's cause. Paul and Burns took the opportunity to condemn police inaction and solicit press coverage and donations, and they recruited Alva Belmont to assist. The Committee immediately capitalized on the momentum from the parade to organize a delegation to the White House, the first of four during that year, to urge Wilson to support the amendment. They also presented petitions to Congress from state delegations in April 1913 and led an automobile parade to Congress the following July to present another petition.

Feeling that the Congressional Committee was too closely tied to NAWSA to be effective at raising money, Burns and Paul formed a new entity, the Congressional

18 "Suffrage Paraders," *The Crisis* (NAACP), April 1913; Walton, *A Woman's Crusade*, 77.

19 "Suffrage Paraders," *The Crisis* (NAACP), April 1913.

20 Walton, *A Woman's Crusade*, 66.

21 Sharon Harley and Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, ed. *African American Women: Struggles and Images* (Black Classic Press 1978), 25.

Union for Woman Suffrage (CU) in April 1913. While still affiliated with NAWSA, the CU was a separate organization founded solely to advocate for the federal amendment.

The efforts of the Congressional Committee and the CU had some immediate results. In April 1913, the federal suffrage amendment was introduced into Congress for the first time since 1896, and debated on the floor for the first time since 1878, although it went no farther at that time.²² In November 1913, the CU launched its own weekly journal, *The Suffragist*, with Rheta Childe Door as the editor. The CU also began organizing state branches and a men's auxiliary, produced pro-suffrage publications, and continued its fundraising campaign.

Throughout 1913, relations between the CU and NAWSA leadership had become increasingly tense. The Congressional Committee and the CU were committed to pursuing a federal amendment. While NAWSA supported a federal amendment, it disagreed with the CU's focus on the party in power and wanted to continue a broader approach that included the state-by-state strategy. The CU hosted the NAWSA annual convention in Washington, DC, in December 1913, where the tensions broke into an open rift over the issue of fundraising. NAWSA leaders forced Alice Paul to choose between chairing the Congressional Committee and the Congressional Union, and blocked the CU's work to develop state branches. The conflict became public in January 1914 when the CU was accused of misusing its funds. When NAWSA turned down the CU's reapplication as an auxiliary,

22 Lunardini, "From Equal Suffrage to Equal Rights," 92-93.

Figure 1-13. Photograph of large crowd of suffragists who took part in Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage procession of May 9, 1914, gathered on the steps of the US Capitol. Those in front line, white dresses with sashes, are singing "The Woman's March" (Library of Congress).





Figure 1-14. National suffrage demonstration in Washington, DC, 1914 (Library of Congress).

Paul, Burns, and the other CU members separated the organizations completely in February 1914.

Independent from NAWSA, the CU organized a second suffrage demonstration in Washington on May 9, 1914. Participants once again marched down Pennsylvania Avenue, starting at the White House and ending at the Capitol (Figure 1-14).

This time, police promised that the marchers would be “amply protected” and that the women would “not be subjected to the indignities they underwent when they marched from the Capitol to the White House on the day before the 1913 inauguration.” The parade followed a meeting at the Belasco Theater on Lafayette Square, where congressmen and others addressed the crowd, expressing why they were willing to vote for the federal suffrage amendment. The parade followed nation-wide demonstrations held the previous Saturday, May 2, 1914. Envoys from these demonstrations brought signed petitions to Washington, carried them in the parade, and presented them to a committee of senators and congressmen at the Capitol. At the end of the parade, a large crowd of suffragists from the procession gathered on the Capitol steps, singing “The Woman’s March” (Figure 1-13).²³

The CU held its first independent conference in August 1914 at Alva Belmont’s Marble House in Newport, Rhode Island, to discuss the structure of the new organization and its strategy for the federal amendment. It decided to target Democrats in western states where women already had the vote to demonstrate their power, including California, Arizona, Colorado, Kansas, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Utah. The campaign gained some support from the

²³ “Charge on Capitol,” *Washington Post*, 9 May 1914: 1.

Republican Party and Republican-leaning newspapers, largely in their own self-interest rather than any real support for women's suffrage. In November 1914, 23 of the 43 candidates targeted by the CU lost; while it was not solely because of the suffragists' campaign, it did help the CU claim some credit.²⁴

In 1915, the CU began organizing in all 48 states and holding demonstrations to bring national attention to the federal amendment. By the end of the year, it had branches in 19 states, affiliations with existing suffrage organizations in several others, over 4,500 members, and had raised more than \$50,000.²⁵ At the organization's national convention in September at the Presidio in San Francisco, the speakers included such nationally recognized figures as Helen Keller and her former teacher Annie Sullivan Macey, former President Theodore Roosevelt, education pioneer Maria Montessori, and evangelist Billy Sunday. At the end of the convention, the CU sent member Sara Bard Field by automobile to Washington, DC, carrying a petition with over 500,000 signatures supporting the national amendment, which she delivered to President Wilson. In addition to its publicity campaign, the CU also worked to advance the bill in Congress, lobbying individual legislators and working to move the bill through committees. The amendment was once again brought to the floor of Congress in 1915, where it was defeated.

While the CU had formally separated from NAWSA early in 1914, this did not end tensions between the organizations. In that year, NAWSA had introduced a competing federal amendment, known as the Shafroth-Palmer Amendment, which would have mandated the state-by-state approach by requiring a state to hold a referendum if eight percent of voters in that state signed a petition. NAWSA believed this was a more palatable approach as it would bypass southern Democrats who opposed women's suffrage because it would enfranchise Black women. However, it also undercut the CU strategy. NAWSA eventually dropped the Shafroth-Palmer Amendment, both due to dissent within its own ranks and the continued defeat of state referendums, including all the measures held in the eastern states in 1915.

THE NATIONAL WOMAN'S PARTY AND THE PASSAGE OF THE 19TH AMENDMENT, 1916 TO 1920

By early 1916, the Congressional Union had succeeded in shifting the focus of the suffrage campaign to the federal amendment. In January of that year, the organization moved its headquarters to Cameron House (21 Madison Place NW,

24 Lunardini, "From Equal Suffrage to Equal Rights," 145.

25 Lunardini, "From Equal Suffrage to Equal Rights," 160-161, 172.



Figure 1-15. Cameron House, ca. 1920 (Library of Congress).

Figure 1-15) on Lafayette Square.²⁶ The house's proximity to the White House, on the northeast side of Lafayette Square, was both symbolic and practical. It symbolized the organization's commitment to pressuring President Woodrow Wilson, and, the following year, was logistically important when the suffragists began picketing at the White House. Although the group moved out of the Cameron House in 1918, it would keep its headquarters on Lafayette Square until ratification of the 19th Amendment.

1916 was a presidential election year, and the Democratic Party decided to delay consideration of the women's suffrage amendment until after the election. It was also the year that the Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage decided to reorganize as a political party, the National Woman's Party. Following a "Suffrage Special" tour of western states to raise publicity and gather delegates, the organization held its annual convention at the Blackstone Theater in Chicago in June. The proposal for a new political party, organized with a similar structure to the Congressional Union, passed enthusiastically as delegates recommitted to their shared goal of passing a federal suffrage amendment.

In holding its national convention, the new National Woman's Party (NWP) continued its successful strategy of scheduling the time and place of its meetings close to other events to draw maximum publicity. In this case, the convention was held immediately before the Republican national convention, also in Chicago. Although the NWP was unable to secure endorsement of the amendment by either the Republican or Democratic parties, both did include language supportive

²⁶ The house, now known as the Benjamin Ogle Tayloe House, is still extant at 21 Madison Place.

of women's suffrage in their platforms, and Republican presidential candidate Charles Evans Hughes personally endorsed the amendment.

For the 1916 elections, the NWP repeated its 1914 campaign strategy of targeting Democratic candidates, but it was harder this time around, due to a more prepared opposition, the addition of a presidential campaign, and the potential of the United States being drawn into World War I. Consequently, it was difficult to claim any kind of impact when Woodrow Wilson lost only two of the states where women were enfranchised and the party failed to defeat Democratic candidates for Congress. While Wilson had begun to express his personal support for the federal amendment, he deferred any official action, citing lack of support in his party and a deference for states' rights.

In the wake of the unsuccessful 1916 elections, the National Woman's Party considered how to create a bigger impact. The organizational work of the previous three years, as well as the petitions, marches, and lobbying, had moved the needle slightly, but progress was still slow. In early January 1917, the NWP presented another petition to President Wilson, which went unanswered. Wilson had told the party that it needed to stir public opinion. He likely did not anticipate the effect of those words: the NWP leadership decided to expand its direct action to include picketing the White House. It was a tactic that had been used previously by the Women's Freedom League in London, and later by Harriot Stanton Blatch's Women's Political Union in Albany, New York, where two "silent sentinels" were stationed outside the state legislature's Judiciary Committee meeting to protest its inaction.

On January 10, 1917, twelve women of the NWP walked across Lafayette Square carrying banners in the suffragist colors of purple, white, and gold, and began their silent vigil at the gates of the White House (Figure 1-16). They were reportedly the first people to ever picket the White House.²⁷ The picket drew a tremendous response from supporters. Coordinated by NWP member Mabel Vernon, thousands of women volunteered to spend time on the pickets or to otherwise provide support. The party held "themed" days where it highlighted certain states, institutions, and professions. Among the pickets were Black women, including Mary Church Terrell, although Terrell remained critical of the White suffragists' disinterest in issues relevant to Black women. On March 4, 1917, four years after the first suffrage parade on the eve of Woodrow Wilson's first inauguration, over 1,000 women participated in a "Grand Picket" to call out his

27 "Alice Paul and Suffragists Were First to Picket the White House," *Smithsonian Snapshot*, <https://www.si.edu/newsdesk/snapshot/alice-paul-and-suffragists-were-first-picket-white-house>, accessed September 2020.



Figure 1-16. The first 12 picketers outside Cameron House, January 10, 1917 (Library of Congress).

inaction; Wilson reportedly drove past the picket without acknowledging the women. The initial tone of the picketing was positive but that began to change as the United States moved closer to war. In anticipation of this, the NWP members met to discuss their position. Along with Alice Paul, many in the organization were Quakers who were unlikely to take part in a war effort, but continuing agitation for a suffrage amendment while the country was at war would almost certainly draw intense criticism. The convention decided to continue picketing, in contrast to NAWSA, which downplayed its suffrage activism and took on war work.

As anticipated, following the US entry into World War I in April 1917, the picketing campaign became more disruptive, especially when the pickets held banners comparing the United States unfavorably to Russia during a diplomatic visit from Russian representatives. Crowds began to gather and spectators attacked the pickets. In June, police began arresting the pickets on charges of obstruction of traffic, the only applicable law they could find. Although the women could have paid a fine, they chose to go to the District jail for three days on principle (Figure 1-17). The following month, 16 women were sentenced to 60 days confinement at Occoquan Workhouse, a federal prison in Virginia (Figure 1-18). Although President Wilson soon pardoned and released the first group, more and more women were arrested in subsequent months with longer sentences handed down.



Figure 1-17. Van bringing suffrage prisoners to the District jail, 1917 (Library of Congress).



Figure 1-18. Exterior of Occoquan Workhouse, 1917 (Blackbird Archive, Virginia Commonwealth University).

Prison officials began abusing the prisoners, both physically and psychologically, putting them in solitary confinement and attempting to humiliate them by making them sleep next to Black women prisoners. In October, Alice Paul was arrested and sentenced to seven months in the District jail, the longest term handed down. In a callback to her experience in the British suffrage movement, Paul and fellow



Figure 1-19. Lucy Burns with banner, left, and in Occoquan prison, right, 1917 (Library of Congress).

inmate and NWP member Rose Winslow began a hunger strike; in response, their jailers brutally force fed them.²⁸

The NWP widely publicized the conditions under which its women were being held, with former prisoners detailing their experiences. This roused public sympathy for the women, and in late November all the picketers were released. Their sentences were invalidated in March 1918. Although the NWP continued to picket the White House from time to time over the next year, it did not draw as intense a response as it had in 1917. The NWP also never engaged in some of the more extreme tactics used by the British suffragists, like smashing windows.

By the beginning of 1918, support for a federal amendment was building. It is unclear to what extent the NWP's picketing influenced this progress. It is true that the picketing had stirred public opinion, as Wilson had earlier recommended, and indeed, Wilson publicly endorsed the federal amendment in January 1918. Other factors, many of them interrelated, may also have influenced public opinion. Women had entered the workforce in large numbers following the US entry into World War I, replacing men who were joining the army to fight in Europe. As well, a number of states passed women's suffrage measures in 1917. Among these was New York, a populous state whose many representatives improved the prospects of a pro-suffrage majority in Congress. The "solid South" was breached for the

²⁸ Doris Stevens, *Jailed for Freedom* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1920) 109, 216-224.



Figure 1-20. 14 Jackson Place, ca. 1918-1920 (Library of Congress).

first time when Arkansas became the first southern state to grant women the right to vote, albeit in primary elections only. NAWSA, which had supported the war effort, used its credibility to make the case that women's war work demonstrated their fitness to vote, and cited recent state voting victories as evidence of growing public support. Wilson, who by now appeared to support the amendment, used the war as a pretext to argue that the suffrage amendment was a "war emergency measure."

The day after President Wilson publicly expressed his support for the federal amendment, the House of Representatives passed the Anthony Amendment with exactly the two-thirds majority required under the Constitution. The same month, following eviction by its landlord, the NWP moved its headquarters to a different

house on the west side of Lafayette Square, 14 Jackson Place NW (Figure 1-20), where it would remain until 1922.

With victory in the House, the suffrage battle turned to the Senate, where passage was still uncertain. Following a filibuster in the Senate in June, NWP resumed its militant tactics, targeting recalcitrant Senators in both parties. NWP members disrupted a session of the Republican national convention in July 1918, resumed demonstrations in Lafayette Square that resulted in further arrests and hunger strikes, and urged Wilson to more actively work to pass the amendment. Votes in the Senate in September and October failed by just a few votes, and with 1918 being an election year, the House passage expired with the end of the congressional session.

In 1918, three more states passed women's suffrage measures, adding to the pressure to pass a federal amendment. The NWP kept up its militant campaign to put pressure on the Senate. It held "watchfire" demonstrations in Lafayette Square, burning copies of anti-suffrage speeches and effigies of President Wilson (Figure 1-21). These demonstrations sparked more attacks from bystanders and resulted in further arrests of NWP members. The campaign was also complicated by the influenza pandemic of 1918-1920. Following a relatively mild wave in early 1918, a more deadly outbreak spread across the country in the autumn. With tens of thousands ill in Washington, DC, large gatherings were banned and many were



Figure 1-21. Watchfire demonstration outside the White House, 1919 (Library of Congress).

Figure 1-22. Picketer Lucy Branham in Occoquan prison dress during the Prison Special Tour, 1919 (Library of Congress).



forced to quarantine. Paul had planned to send 26 women who had spent time in jail on a three week “Prison Special” train tour around the country. The tour eventually took place in February 1919, after the pandemic had temporarily eased (Figure 1-22).²⁹

In the new congressional session, the House re-passed the amendment on May 21, 1919, but the measure was still blocked by a few senators, several of whom openly spoke against the amendment because it would enfranchise Black women. Over the next several weeks, the NWP coordinated an intense lobbying campaign targeting the few holdout senators. Finally, on June 4, 1919, the Senate passed the Anthony Amendment with the required two-thirds majority.

Despite the long-sought victory that passage in the House and Senate represented, the amendment still had to be ratified by 36 states. Following the Senate’s vote, Alice Paul and Carrie Chapman Catt, the president of NAWSA, sent telegrams to the governors of all 48 states, urging them to support ratification in their states. Both the NWP and NAWSA had effective state organizations that it could call on, and unsurprisingly some of the states with the most active delegations were the first to ratify the amendment. As the ratification battle unfolded, the NWP lobbied legislators in each state, held rallies and fundraisers, and picketed at the major party conventions. It often had to tailor its strategy to conditions in each state, and respond to legal challenges to ratification votes.

²⁹ Walton, *A Woman’s Crusade*, 226, 233-34.

On June 10, 1919, less than a week after the Senate vote, three states, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Michigan, were the first to ratify the amendment. The following week, Kansas, the first state to hold a referendum for women's suffrage in 1867, voted unanimously to ratify. Toward the end of June, Texas was the first southern state to ratify, but the following month another southern state, Georgia, was the first to defeat ratification. By the end of July, the amendment was already one-third of the way to full ratification, and in November, it reached the halfway mark with California's affirmative vote. In March 1920, Washington became the 35th state to ratify the amendment. When Mississippi rejected ratification at the end of the month, momentum stalled as suffragists worked to pass the final state ratification vote.

After several months of intense lobbying by both the NWP and NAWSA, an expected win in Delaware turned into defeat when the legislature gave in to anti-suffrage leaders and voted down the amendment. Of the thirteen states who had not ratified, eight had already rejected the amendment (Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Delaware), leaving Connecticut, Vermont, Florida, North Carolina, and Tennessee to still hold votes. Tennessee became the battleground for final ratification with representatives of suffrage and anti-suffrage groups descending on the state. As in many southern states, legislators in Tennessee viewed the amendment with suspicion as it would enfranchise Black women. Some White suffragists tried to counter this by arguing that Black women's votes could as easily be suppressed as those of Black men, while White women would bolster the numbers of White voters. Finally, on



Figure 1-23. Alice Paul hoists ratification banner while NWP members celebrate, 1920 (Library of Congress).

August 18, 1920, 24-year-old Harry Burn, at the urging of his mother, broke the tie in the Tennessee legislature and cast the deciding vote for ratification. When the Tennessee vote was certified on August 26, 1920, the 19th Amendment officially became the law. At the National Woman's Party Headquarters in Washington, DC, Alice Paul hoisted from the balcony a flag embroidered with a star for each state that had ratified the amendment (Figure 1-23).³⁰

THE REALITIES OF VOTING AFTER THE RATIFICATION OF THE 19TH AMENDMENT

After more than 70 years of struggle to achieve voting rights for women, the ratification of the 19th Amendment was a pivotal moment. But for many women, exercising their new constitutional right was far from straightforward. Women had to overcome social norms that discouraged participation in voting. Politicians had to learn new strategies to appeal to and reach women voters. More pressing, state and local governments had to add staff, resources, and equipment in order to accommodate the numbers of new voters in time for the November 1920 presidential election, only three months after the ratification.³¹ Even though women in 15 states already had the right to vote by 1920, many Americans, specifically politicians, did not know what to expect.³²

In part, this uncertainty reflected the changing intellectual arguments that suffragists had used to justify their right to vote. In the early nineteenth century, suffrage activists derived their case from the principle of natural rights: that women deserved to be equal to men in all aspects of life, including the right to vote. But by the end of the nineteenth and into the early twentieth century, many reformers used gender distinctions to argue that women's moral character was greater than men's and would enable them to solve social problems through the vote.³³ In making this argument, suffragists directly countered the fears of anti-suffragists that women's moral standing would be compromised by participating in politics and abandoning their traditional responsibilities in the home.

30 The amendment was challenged in a number of court cases, but was upheld by the Supreme Court in February 1922.

31 J. Kevin Corder and Christina Wolbrecht, "Did Women Vote Once they had the Opportunity," *American Bar Association*, 2 December 2019, accessed 28 April 2020 at https://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_education/publications/insights-on-law-and-society/volume-20/issue-1/did-women-vote-once-they-had-the-opportunity-/.

32 Christina Wolbrecht and J. Kevin Corder, *A Century of Votes for Women* (Cambridge University Press, 2020), 1.

33 Lori D. Ginzberg, "Radical Imaginings: The View from Atop a Slippery Slope," *Journal of Women's History* 32, no. 1 (February 29, 2020): 14–22, <https://doi.org/10.1353/jowh.2020.0002>.



Figure 1-24. Alice Paul (r) shown casting her vote in the 1920 presidential election. Catherine Flanagan (l) shown certifying Paul's vote before it was sent by mail to New Jersey, November 2, 1920 (Library of Congress).

Ironically, while many of the protests and efforts to achieve the passage of the 19th Amendment took place in the District of Columbia, women of the District were not able to vote after ratification in 1920. Since the District is a federal district and not a state, residents, women or men, could not legally vote in presidential elections until Congress passed the 23rd Amendment, ratified in 1961. Additionally, District residents lacked elected voting representation in Congress, which continues to hold true today. Consequently, many of the residents of the District retained their official residency in other states. Of the 437,571 residents of the District in 1920, approximately 60,000 were eligible to vote in their home state by absentee ballot.³⁴

Most notable among these was Alice Paul herself, who spent a considerable amount of time in Washington in the years leading up to the passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment, but remained a legal resident of New Jersey. Consequently, Paul was able to cast her vote in the 1920 presidential election

34 "Election Laws of States Explained to DC Voters," *Evening Star*, 22 August 1920:16; National Park Service, "District of Columbia and the 19th Amendment," accessed 29 April 2020 at <https://www.nps.gov/articles/district-of-columbia-and-the-19th-amendment.htm>.

Figure 1-25. “This year [1920] for the first time women have the right to vote in all the states of the Union; and that they are exercising it is evident by this picture made at Clarendon, VA, polls, showing four of the fair sex about to cast their votes” (*Evening Star*, 2 November 1920).



through an absentee ballot. In October 1920, President Wilson commissioned Katherine Flanagan, NWP member and suffragist who picketed the White House and participated in hunger strikes, to notarize and certify Alice Paul's vote, which was then sent by mail to New Jersey (Figure 1-24). The *Washington Post* reported that “Leading suffragists from every State will assemble when Miss Paul casts her first vote and make a suffrage jubilee of the occasion.” With the help of Flanagan, Paul was able to cast her first vote for president of the United States.³⁵

In neighboring Virginia, less than five percent of women turned out to vote in the 1920 presidential election (Figure 1-25).³⁶ Residents of Virginia, like many in southern states, had to pay a capitalization tax, or poll tax, by October 2, 1920, in order to register to vote, which created limitations for many women. The numbers of women registering to vote in Virginia varied greatly by location. In Lynchburg, Virginia, 160 women paid their state capitalization tax during the first two weeks after the ratification of the 19th Amendment in order to vote in the November presidential election. Black women in Lynchburg held two large meetings to “arouse interest in registration.” The *Washington Post* also reported that White women in some of Virginia's counties were turning out in large numbers to register as voters, but that reports from many sections of the state, particularly those in rural communities, showed “a startling lack of interest.” In several counties, no women had registered, while in others numbers ranged from 10 to 75. In Rockingham County, which had a population of approximately 35,000 in 1920, more than 300 women had registered. In Alexandria, Virginia, voters had to pay a capitalization tax of \$1.50 in order to register to vote. As of September 1, only

35 “Alice Paul Insists She is Jersey Voter,” *Evening Public Ledger*, Philadelphia, 9 October 1920:3; “President Honors Suffrage Picket,” *Washington Times*, 26 October 1920:17; “After Seven Years!” *Knoxville Sentinel*, 2 November 1920:11; “Militant Alice Paul to Vote,” *Washington Post*, 27 October 1920.

36 Corder and Wolbrecht, “Did Women Vote Once they had the Opportunity.”

24 women had paid the tax before the October 2 deadline. By the deadline, 1,399 women had registered.³⁷

Other Virginia women were excluded because of residency requirements. In September 1920, the *Washington Post* reported that women who had not lived in the state for two years would be ineligible to vote, even if they had paid their capitalization taxes. A woman guest of a hotel in Richmond paid the capitalization tax for one year, but when she tried to register to vote, the registrar told her that she was not eligible since she had not lived in the state for two years, as required by the commonwealth's constitution.³⁸

In addition to poll taxes and residency restrictions, women of color faced even more challenges. Indeed, the poll tax was one of the tactics used by White southerners to disenfranchise Black men, and it worked as well for Black women. In the months following ratification, Black suffrage activists worked to encourage Black women to register to vote. In Baltimore, a local Black newspaper appealed to Black women to register and vote in the presidential election —specifically for Warren G. Harding. The appeal read:

Congratulations upon your victory of enfranchisement. This high privilege and recognition of womanhood should stir every woman to activity in this present campaign. Providence has opened the door of opportunity and stands at the door pointing every woman to duty and responsibility.

The ballot, a weapon of protection to self and home, is in your hands; not to use it would be ingratitude to God and disloyalty to humanity.

We advise every colored woman to register early and be at the polls on the day of election, between 1 and 2 PM, and cast your ballot for Harding and Coolidge.

In consideration of the unjust treatment of the colored people by the local organization, to support it would be compromising self-respect, humiliating the race and tolerating a most vicious insult. Vote for Harding and Coolidge only.³⁹

37 "Women Pay Taxes to Vote," *Washington Post*, 13 September 1920; "Women Pay Poll Tax," *Alexandria Gazette*, 1 September 1920:1. "Alexandria," *Washington Herald*, 3 October 1920:16. The poll tax remained in effect in Virginia until the 24th Amendment to the United States Constitution was ratified in 1964. Virginia Durr, a White civil rights activist from Alexandria, Virginia, co-founded the National Committee to Abolish the Poll Tax in 1941. Although the Committee disbanded in 1948, its lobbying and educational work was instrumental in building congressional support for abolishing the poll tax. See Susan Cianci Salvatore, "Civil Rights in America: Racial Voting Rights," National Historic Landmarks Theme Study (Washington, DC: National Park Service National Historic Landmarks Program, 2009), 126.

38 "Woman Fails to Get Vote," *Washington Post*, 9 September 1920:3.

39 "Negro Women Get Call to Register and Vote," *The Baltimore Sun*, 7 September 1920:7.

In Richmond, Virginia, Black and White women seeking to register to vote before the November 1920 election overwhelmed the city's segregated registration offices. In one day alone, 578 women registered to vote. Although the city responded by appointing three additional deputies for White women, it ignored similar requests by Black women. Long lines formed outside the registration offices. The *Washington Post* reported that on September 18, 1920, the registration office was "[s]wamped by a rush of women seeking to register in order to vote" and that "policemen were immediately stationed at [the registrar's] office to keep applicants in line. Negro women were practically in possession of the office this morning, with White women standing outside in the corridor when a call for aid was made."⁴⁰ A few days later, the registrar's office moved registration for Black women to the basement of the building. When the office closed at 4 p.m., an hour later than the usual closing hour, 100 or more women were still waiting in the basement to register. Responding to complaints that White women were receiving preferential treatment, Joseph R. Pollard, a prominent Black Richmond attorney who later ran for US Senator, assured the women that officials were not attempting to deter them from registering.⁴¹

Virginia's constitution also included a requirement to pass a literacy test in order to register to vote, which remained in place until 1971.⁴² This was another common tactic used by White southerners to deny Black people the opportunity to vote. In an attempt to cast doubt on the fitness of Black women to vote, the *News Leader*, from Staunton, Virginia, reported in September 1920 that predominately Black voting districts in Richmond were "turning loose scores of colored women, all claiming to qualify for the vote." The newspaper claimed that "in the early days of the registration it was possible for illiterate negro women to mix with the waiting crowd in the registration office, obtain one of the blue slips which the registrar handed out, retire to the corridor and have it filled out by a friend, usually a man who came for the purpose." Consequently, a Democratic chairman arranged for "more thorough examination of applicants and made it impossible for applicants to obtain assistance in preparation of registration papers."⁴³

On the first day of voter registration in Baltimore, Maryland, less than 10 percent of women in the city registered to vote; 10,000 of the approximately 142,000 White

40 "White Women Kept Out," *Washington Post*, 18 September 1920: 4. also Corder and Woldbrecht, "Did Women Vote Once they had the Opportunity."

41 "Richmond Women Register at Rate of 578 in One Day," *The Times Dispatch*, Richmond Virginia, 21 September 1920.

42 "Disenfranchisement in Virginia," accessed 29 April 2020 at <http://www.virginiaplaces.org/government/disfranchisement.html>.

43 "Richmond Checks Negro Women's Rush to Register," *The News Leader*, Staunton, Virginia, 22 September 1920:6.

women, and around 2,500 of the approximately 28,000 Black women registered. However, The *Baltimore Sun* reported that women of “all races and classes” came out to vote:

Pioneers to the American West when it was wild never fared forth more sturdily, with more determination, more adventure in their souls than did the women of Baltimore who registered yesterday to vote in the November elections. Out of the marble palaces and lofty apartment houses around upper Charles Street and University Parkway, they came chicly tailored and richly furred, to register in cellars. Down from the white wooded porches in East and South Baltimore they came in aprons, wrappers or new suits, as they thought right and proper.⁴⁴

After the third day of registration, the newspaper reported that the ratio of Black women to Black men registered to vote was higher than the ratio of White women to White men. Both Democratic and Republican political leaders recognized that their “chief duty” was to get White women to register. The newspaper reported that the “large antisuffrage element, it is said, which has determined to stay away from the polls, is slowly beginning to realize its responsibility. Efforts are being concentrated, therefore, upon urging White women, irrespective of suffrage or antisuffrage leanings or political affiliation, to get their names upon the registration books.”⁴⁵

On the day of the presidential election, November 2, 1920, women in Maryland and Virginia turned out early to vote. The Washington *Evening Star* reported that the “presence of the women, who are being given their first opportunity to day to cast their vote for a President of the United States, gave the voting places and air more of a social gathering.” Large automobiles brought groups of women to polling places and in some instances, made multiple trips. Many of the women who worked for the federal government, as well as others who were employed in the District, went to the polls in the morning before coming into the city. They had been warned that they might not be able to vote if they arrived late.⁴⁶ The *Washington Post* reported that on voting day, polling was unusually heavy in Baltimore due to the strong showing of women voters.⁴⁷ The *Baltimore Sun* also reported that some women, not satisfied just to cast their votes, organized dinners and other social events the night of the election to track returns and celebrate their new rights.⁴⁸ In Alexandria, Virginia, women voted “in large numbers and fully three fourths of the number qualified took part in the election.”⁴⁹ Around 100

44 “Women Out in Throngs to Register as Voters,” *Baltimore Sun*, 22 September 1920: 24.

45 “50,000 Women Listed,” *Baltimore Sun*, 6 October 1920:30.

46 “Women Give Polls Air of Social Gathering,” *Evening Star*, 2 November 1920:2.

47 “Republicans Lead in Maryland Vote,” *Washington Post*, 3 November 1920.

48 “Will Amuse Women Waiting for Returns,” *Baltimore Sun*, 2 November 1920.

49 “Cox Victor in City by 495 Majority,” *Alexandria Gazette*, 3 November 1920.

persons had voted by 7 a.m. on November 2, 1920, in Thurmont, Maryland, and many of whom were women. The local newspaper reported that “if other women in other districts throughout the country worked to get their women friends to register to vote as did Thurmont women, it is certain they showed the oldtime male workers that they could bring about results.”⁵⁰

Despite women’s efforts to register to vote, and the stories of heavy turnout on voting day, actual participation by women in the 1920 presidential election was relatively low, although there was a great deal of variation in percentages across the country. The available evidence also suggested that women tended to divide along party lines rather than use their collective power to effect social reform, one of the arguments used by some suffrage activists to claim their right to vote.⁵¹ Viewed through this lens, early scholarship concluded that women’s suffrage was a failure. However, other factors also impacted women’s effectiveness at the ballot box, including legal and organizational factors that obstructed or slowed the mobilization of women voters. In reality, the incorporation of women as full equals in the electoral process would take decades.⁵²

50 “Big Vote Polled Here,” *Catoctin Clarion*, Mechanicstown, Maryland, 5 November 1920.

51 Flexner and Fitzpatrick, *Century of Struggle*, 338.

52 Corder and Wolbrecht, “Did Women Vote Once they had the Opportunity.”



CHAPTER 2:

THE NATIONAL WOMAN'S PARTY

1920-1929

Chapter title page: Girls march at the dedication of the Old Brick Capitol (National Woman's Party Headquarters), 1922 (Library of Congress).

CHAPTER 2: NATIONAL WOMAN'S PARTY, 1920-1929

After the ratification of the 19th Amendment in 1920, the National Woman's Party shifted its focus to ending legal discrimination against women in federal and state statutes and gaining equal rights for women, both at home and abroad. This chapter summarizes changes to the National Woman's Party structure and goals in the first decade after the 19th Amendment, and before it moved its headquarters to the Sewall-Belmont House.

THE NWP AND THE AFTERMATH OF THE 19TH AMENDMENT

Following ratification of the 19th Amendment in August 1920, the members of the National Woman's Party celebrated achieving a goal they and their predecessors had been working toward for over 70 years. Several months later, many were able to vote in a presidential election for the first time. But apart from the jubilation, there was also confusion, for what was the party to do next? With its goal achieved, should it be disbanded? Or was there more to be accomplished?

The NWP's rival organization, the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) had reconstituted itself earlier that year as the League of Women Voters (LWV) to educate and assist women in exercising their new constitutional rights. After discussion among its leadership in late 1920 and early 1921, the NWP called a convention in Washington, DC, to consider the organization's future (Figure 2-1).

The NWP invited representatives of women's organizations across the country to attend the convention, submit proposals, and contribute to the discussion of the party's future. In late December 1920, Mary White Ovington, a White socialist, feminist, and founding member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) wrote to NWP founder Lucy Burns, urging the organization to include a Black woman on the agenda. Ovington suggested that Mary B. Talbert (Figure 2-2), secretary of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs (NACWC, formerly the National Association of Colored Women (NACW)) and the former president of the Federation of Colored Women, be invited to speak. Ovington framed her request in reference to the challenges Black women still faced in exercising their right to vote under the 19th Amendment.



Figure 2-1. NWP members planning the national convention, February 1921 (Library of Congress).

Burns forwarded the letter to Alice Paul with her support for Ovington's request.¹ Ovington wrote a similar letter to Harriot Stanton Blatch, who likewise forwarded the request to Alice Paul with her support. Florence Kelley, General Secretary of the National Consumers' League, met with Paul at around the same time and also asked her to include Mary Talbert on the agenda.

Kelley reported back to Ovington that Paul objected to including Talbert on the agenda for several reasons. The first was that the Federation of Colored Women's primary legislative agenda was an anti-lynching bill, and Paul felt that was "not a woman's measure." Paul also suggested to Kelley that "inflaming" southerners at the convention would jeopardize the party's plan to introduce an enforcement bill that Paul believed would address the suppression of Black women's suffrage in the South.² NWP secretary Emma Wold later replied to both Burns and Blatch, reiterating the convention's exclusion of Talbert on the grounds that "the advancement of colored people is a racial [program] rather than a feminist one." Blatch noted on her copy of the letter that "...it evades the point obviously."³

- 1 Mary White Ovington, letter to Lucy Burns, December 17, 1920, accessed May 5, 2020, <http://www.nzdl.org/gsdmod?e=extlink-00000-00---off-0whist--00-0----0-10-0---0---0direct-10---4-----0-11--11-en-50---20-nav---00-0-1-00-0--4----0-0-11-10-0utfZz-8-00&a=d&d=HASH8c59251eb234ff3dce4e1>.
- 2 Florence Kelly, letter to Mary White Ovington, December 22, 1920, accessed May 5, 2020, <http://www.nzdl.org/gsdmod?e=extlink-00000-00---off-0whist--00-0----0-10-0---0---0direct-10---4-----0-11--11-en-50---20-nav---00-0-1-00-0--4----0-0-11-10-0utfZz-8-00&a=d&d=HASH60ba50d48f97bc178455ac>.
- 3 Emma Wold, letter to Harriot Stanton Blatch, December 29, 1920, accessed May 5, 2020, <http://www.nzdl.org/gsdmod?e=extlink-00000-00---off-0whist--00-0----0-10-0---0---0direct-10---4-----0-11--11-en-50---20-nav---00-0-1-00-0--4----0-0-11-10-0utfZz-8-00&a=d&d=HASH8c59251eb234ff3dce4e1>.



Figure 2-2. Mary Talbert, ca. 1915 (Public Domain).

Ovington tried again in early January 1921, pointing out to Alice Paul that Talbert represented Black women in the United States, a constituency whose needs and challenges were little known or understood by White women. In a private letter to Mrs. W. Spencer Murray, a representative of the New York State branch of the party, Ovington noted that “Miss Paul unquestionably is more influenced by her southern White constituency than by those northerners who believe in working for the colored woman.”⁴

0-11-10-0utfZz-8-00&a=d&d=HASH0184878cf50baf182f7d8e8e.

4 Mary White Ovington, letter to Alice Paul, January 4, 1921; and Mary White Ovington, letter to Mrs. W. Spencer Murray, January 12, 1921, both accessed May



Figure 2-3. Women's groups at the dedication of the suffrage pioneer sculpture, 1921 (Library of Congress).

Paul did not agree to put a Black woman speaker on the agenda, noting that Black women could speak from the floor. She did, however, arrange to include Mary Church Terrell and Mrs. Gray, president of the National Republican Colored Women's Clubs, in the opening event of the convention, the ceremonial unveiling of a sculpture in the crypt of the United States Capitol featuring three suffrage pioneers, Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Lucretia Mott (Figure 2-3).

Following the unveiling, the convention settled down to debating the NWP's structure and direction. The party's National Executive Committee had, in the planning stages of the convention, developed a draft resolution to disband the NWP in its existing form, immediately reorganize under the same name, and define its "immediate work" as "the removal of the legal disabilities of women," which took the form of an amendment to the Constitution guaranteeing women equal rights (see below for further discussion of the Equal Rights Amendment)⁵. Other delegates proposed different agendas for the new NWP. The party's National Advisory Council presented a minority report arguing that the party should devote itself to disarmament, on the premise that saving the human race was feminist. Crystal Eastman, a lawyer who had been with the party since its early days as the Congressional Union, proposed a much broader agenda for the

5, 2020, <http://www.nzdl.org/gsdldmod?e=extlink-00000-00---off-0whist--00-0---0-10-0---0---0direct-10---4-----0-11--11-en-50---20-nav---00-0-1-00-0--4----0-11-10-OutfZz-8-00&a=d&d=HASH016f567050a641930870affd>.

5 National Executive Committee, National Woman's Party, minutes, Sept. 10, Oct. 8, Nov. 16, Dec. 10, 1920, Jan. 22, Feb. 14, 1921, reel 114, part A, series 2, "National Woman's Party Papers, 1913-1974."

party to address marriage laws, women's economic dependence, birth control, inheritance, and other laws and social customs.⁶ In the end, the convention easily passed the Executive Committee's resolution, but the manner in which the convention and the party's direction had been decided alienated a vocal minority of its members. Eastman and fellow feminist Freda Kirchwey of *The Nation* believed they had been steamrolled by the party "machine" under the autocratic direction of Alice Paul. Kirchwey, in her analysis of the convention, also sharply criticized Paul and the party's leadership for their indifference to violations of the 19th Amendment that disenfranchised Black women and for voting down a resolution that would have directed the party to investigate those violations. In response to Paul's reported question, "Why do they [i.e. Black women] want to spoil our convention?" Kirchwey referenced the party's tactics in passing the suffrage amendment: "For the very same reason that made you disturb the peace and harass the authorities in your peculiarly effective and irritating way: because they want to further the cause they believe in."⁷

It is perhaps unsurprising that some of the party's members left to pursue their own agendas following the successful fight to pass the 19th Amendment, but the bitter debates at the convention and the exclusion of Black women alienated many who might otherwise have stayed. The NWP began gaining a reputation as a party run by and for elite and middle-class White women. The relatively high initiation fee and annual dues imposed on members reinforced that impression. The party would never regain the membership numbers it had enjoyed during the height of the suffrage movement.⁸

Following the 1921 convention, the NWP moved forward with its legislative agenda. While this centered on the Equal Rights Amendment, the party also championed federal and state legislation to remove women's legal disabilities. The initial strategy focused on passing so-called "blanket bills": broad equal rights measures designed to remove multiple disabilities in one bill. At the federal level, the 1921 blanket bill proposed eliminating discrimination against women in government service and in District of Columbia codes, and permitting women married to foreign citizens to retain their citizenship. Blanket bills introduced in the states would guarantee protective legislation for women, standardize state law regarding women, expedite the process for granting full equal rights, and repeal discriminatory statutes. In 1921, both Wisconsin and Louisiana passed blanket bills, but otherwise the blanket bills invariably failed, forcing the party to pursue

6 Nancy Cott, "Feminist Politics in the 1920s: The National Woman's Party," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 71, No. 1 (June 1984), 47-48.

7 Freda Kirchwey, "Alice Paul Pulls the Strings," *The Nation*, March 2, 1921.

8 Cott, "Feminist Politics."



Figure 2-4. Members of the NWP meet with Senator Cummings on the Regional Rights Bill, 1924 (Library of Congress).

piecemeal legislation, an approach that was less effective and consumed valuable organizational resources.

The following year, the NWP succeeded with one element of the federal blanket bill. The Cable Act of 1922, named for its sponsor, Representative John L. Cable (R-OH), prevented women from losing citizenship on marrying a foreign husband, with some exceptions, and required women immigrants to register for naturalization independently of their husbands. When the 1924 Immigration Act established quotas and other restrictions to immigration, the NWP petitioned Congress (unsuccessfully) to reform the Cable Act to prevent American-born women from losing their citizenship as a consequence of marrying a man excluded from the United States under the act.

Throughout the 1920s, the party pursued, with varying degrees of success, legislation within the states and the District of Columbia to address a variety of inequalities faced by women, including equal pay and opportunity in employment, the right to serve on juries, equality in custody of children and guardianship, the ability to enter in contracts and administer estates, and many others. Any year typically included some victories and some losses for the party. NWP lawyers were also involved in a number of cases to protect women's rights to use their birth surname in public documents.

In the late 1920s, the NWP conducted a vigorous campaign to extend suffrage to women in Puerto Rico (Figure 2-5). The people of Puerto Rico, an unincorporated



Figure 2-5. Zonia Baber, representing the women of Puerto Rico, consults with NWP Legal Research Secretary Burnita Shelton Matthews, 1926 (Library of Congress).

American territory, had become citizens in 1917, but women's suffrage was still in the hands of the territorial legislature. After several years of lobbying, in 1929 the Puerto Rican legislature passed a limited suffrage bill that required all new voters, women and men, to pass a literacy test in order to vote.

During this period, the party also worked to put women in positions of power in federal government. The 1922 election season represented the first real opportunity for women to run for office, but Alice Paul and other party leaders were angered and frustrated that no major women candidates were elected to office that year and developed a program to encourage and support woman candidates. In the 1924 election, the party supported the ten women nominated for Congress, sending Doris Stevens to Philadelphia to focus its efforts on the five women running in Pennsylvania, reasoning that success would gain the party national publicity for the Equal Rights Amendment. Only Mary Teresa Norton of New Jersey was successful in her election bid.⁹ Two years later, the party revived the "Women for Congress" campaign, with somewhat better results, as several women were elected or re-elected to Congress and state legislatures in 1926, including Katherine Langley of Kentucky, elected to Congress for the first time, and party members Lillian H. Kerr, elected to the Colorado state legislature, and Gail Laughlin, elected to the Maine state legislature.¹⁰ However, the party dropped

⁹ Florence Kahn of California won a special election in February 1925 to fill the seat of her husband, who had been re-elected in 1924 but died that December.

¹⁰ It is somewhat unclear from the sources available for this report what role the party played in the campaigns of successful candidates in 1924 and 1926, and therefore what the true effect of the "Women in Congress" campaign was. See Thomas C. Pardo, ed., *The National Woman's Party Papers 1913-1974* (Sanford,

the program in 1928, preferring to focus on the presidential race and securing endorsement of the ERA from the major political parties. Neither candidate committed to the ERA, but the NWP decided to endorse Republican Herbert Hoover because his running mate, Charles Evans Hughes, had previously aligned with the NWP in supporting equal rights for women. However, this decision alienated many women on the left, and confirmed others in their belief that Alice Paul retained her grip on the party's political agenda.¹¹ The NWP had somewhat more success in its efforts to appoint women to federal positions, helping to secure the appointment of women as United States Civil Service Commissioner and Commissioner of the District of Columbia.

In the face of declining membership, the party worked throughout the 1920s to increase membership and raise funds to support its pursuit of equal rights. In 1923 the NWP began publication of the journal *Equal Rights*, to replace *The Suffragist* which had ceased publication when the party reorganized in February 1921.

In pursuing new members, however, the party's leadership struggled to reconcile the intersection of race and gender with its perceived need to avoid offending White southern women. In 1922, the party recruited heavily in the South, but NWP's organizers there warned Alice Paul that appointing Black women to the National Council (and indirectly to the party itself) would lose the support of White southerners. While Paul would not officially commit to such a policy, her reply indicated that the party would not actively recruit Black women.¹²

The party's appeasement of White supremacists was the cause of another public controversy over its racial insensitivity in 1924. The party had organized a memorial fund in the name of Inez Milholland, an NWP activist who had died in 1916 after collapsing at the podium while delivering a suffrage speech in Los Angeles. Her death shocked the nation and her fellow suffragists and made her a martyr of the suffrage movement. In August 1924 the NWP held a memorial service at Milholland's gravesite in Lewis, New York (Figure 2-6). In addition to her suffrage work, Milholland had also been a civil rights activist, but Alice Paul failed to invite any of the Black delegates or guests present at the ceremony to address the assembly.

Milholland's father, John Elmer Milholland, a New York businessman and the first treasurer of the NAACP, invited Dr. Emmett J. Scott, the secretary-treasurer

North Carolina, 1979), 28; and Jo Freeman, *A Room at a Time: How Women Entered Party Politics* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2000), 130.

11 Cott, "Feminist Politics."

12 Pardo, ed., *The National Woman's Party Papers*, 13.



Figure 2-6. Alice Paul at Inez Milholland's gravesite, 1924 (Library of Congress).

of Howard University, as his guest and to speak at the memorial. Milholland also invited Lucy D. Stowe, Howard University's first Dean of Women, and Addie Waites Hunton, suffragist and vice president and field secretary of the NAACP to attend the service. After the "hundreds of banner girls" covered Inez Milholland's grave with flowers, her father publicly and pointedly criticized the exclusion of Black women:

Friends of Inez, I am her father, and I want to say to you now what I had not intended to say until now as I stand here beside her grave. It feel it my duty to speak out. If I did not, I think her spirit would rise up from the grave and say to me: 'Dad, why were you afraid?' And so I want to remind you that in the first suffrage parade Inez herself demanded that the Colored women be allowed to march, and now today we're told that it would mar the program to have these guests of mine speak. I have nothing to say except that Inez believed in equal rights for everybody.¹³

Dr. Scott was then called forward and asked to speak. Scott spoke of Inez Milholland's devotion to her work and the fact that she fought for equal rights among the races and the sexes. In speaking about her actions at the 1913 suffrage parade, Scott said, "The colored women of America have never forgotten this event, and its bearing upon their political homes and aspirations."

13 "Race Issue Hits Feminist Party," *New York World*, 17-18 August 1924, National Woman's Party Papers, 1913-1974, Library of Congress (Microfilm (1979), Reel 28; "Race Issue at Memorial Service," *Chicago Defender*, 23 August 1924.

NWP member Mrs. Gretta Wold Boyers said of Scott's, Stowe's, and Hunton's attendance, "We did not want it to go out that we were bringing in the colored people. It would be bad politics. We want to try to elect some women congressmen in the southern states, and after all, this is our convention-not Mr. Milholland's." Alice Paul reportedly said, "This was arranged as a demonstration of women and it was no place for colored people to speak. We have invited them to carry a wreath to the grave and their feelings were not hurt." The *Chicago Defender* reported that the sentiment of the women changed after Scott's talk and that "congratulations were extended to him and apologies were made for having omitted him from the program."¹⁴

Walter White, head of the NAACP, sent a telegram to Alice Paul regarding the incident at the memorial service:

The [NAACP] in the name of one hundred thousand Americans white and colored protests against the cowardly capitulation to race prejudice by the National Woman's Party at the grave of Inez Milholland [,] an active member of our association in her lifetime who would have repudiated such a position as you have taken [,] [I]f capitulation to race prejudice is to be the price of election of women to office we sincerely hope that every one of your candidates will be defeated in the coming election.¹⁵

Alice Paul later stated that the only reason that Scott and others were denied the opportunity to speak was that the NWP did not plan on having anyone speak at Milholland's gravesite. However, only White women spoke at an earlier memorial service at a local church, which did not escape notice. Paul later wrote to a journalist at the *New York World*, which had published the events of the memorial service and criticized the NWP's actions and stated, "The Woman's Party is made up of women of all races, creeds and nationalities who are united on the one program of working to raise the status of women. In our organization there is absolutely no discrimination with regard to race, creed or nationality. If we had planned to have speakers on this occasion, the question of their race would not have been considered in selecting them." Regardless of Alice Paul's and the NWP's true intent at the memorial service, the publicity and the NWP's actions to push the rights of African American women to the side in order to gain the southern vote furthered the organization's single-minded focus on women's rights

14 "Race Issue Hits Feminist Party," *New York World*, 17-18 August 1924, National Woman's Party Papers, 1913-1974, Library of Congress (Microfilm (1979), Reel 28); "Race Issue at Memorial Service," *Chicago Defender*, 23 August 1924.

15 Telegram from Walter White to Alice Paul, New York, 18 August 1924, National Woman's Party Papers, 1913-1974, Library of Congress (Microfilm (1979), reel 28), accessed 7 May 2020 at <http://www.nzdl.org/gsdldmod?e=extlink-00000-00---off-0whist--00-0----0-10-0---0---0direct-10---4-----0-11--11-en-50---20-nav---00-0-1-00-0--4----0-0-11-10-0utfZz-8-00&a=d&d=HASH7b7d48c24a88d7faeccd1fd>.

and its failure to connect the causes of women's rights and equal rights for African Americans.¹⁶ In the wake of the controversy, a number of members left the party.

In the mid to late 1920s Alice Paul worked to expand the party's reach internationally. In the aftermath of World War I the United States had become a world power, and Paul believed it was the responsibility of American women to work with other women around the world to raise their status and secure equal rights globally. After spending six months attending feminist conferences in England and France with Alva Belmont, in 1925 Paul organized an International Advisory Committee of the NWP with members from twelve nations to coordinate operations with other international organizations. In 1928 NWP members attended the Pan-American Conference in Havana, Cuba, where they helped influence the Pan-American Union to create the Inter-American Commission of Women (IACW) to consider women's civil and political equality.¹⁷

Later that year, representatives of the IACW attended the Paris conference held to sign the Kellogg-Briand Pact, in which signatory states promised not to use war to resolve disputes or conflicts. When the IACW was denied the opportunity to present an equal rights treaty to the conference, it picketed the conference in a callback to the successful tactics of the suffrage movement. The women, along with several British feminists, were arrested, jailed, and detained until the event was over.

As the decade of the 1920s ended, the NWP prepared to move to yet another new office. For much of the decade, the party had its headquarters in the "Old Brick Capitol" at 21-25 First Street NE, purchased by Alva Belmont in 1921 and dedicated on May 21, 1922 (Figure 2-7). In 1925 the building, which consisted of three rowhouses, was extensively remodeled to serve as a hotel and museum as well as offices for the party, with NWP state chapters providing state-themed furnishings. However, the following year the United States Building Commission and the Congressional Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds chose a site including the Old Brick Capitol as the location of the new Supreme Court Building. Over the next three years, the NWP negotiated

16 "Letter from Alice Paul to Heywood Broun, [Washington D.C.], 26 August 1924, Mary Church Terrell Papers, Library of Congress (Microfilm, reel 5, #601); New Zealand Digital Library, "How Did the National Woman's Party Address the Issue of the Enfranchisement of Black Women, 1919-1924," accessed 7 May 2020 at <http://www.nzdl.org/gsdldmod?e=extlink-00000-00---off-0whist--00-0----0-10-0--0---0direct-10---4-----0-11--11-en-50---20-nav---00-0-1-00-0--4----0-0-11-10-OutfZz-8-00&a=d&d=HASHf655c3f4989225056b94c4>.

17 The Cuban Friendship Urn now located in East Potomac Park was given as a gift from Cuban President Gerardo Machado to US President Calvin Coolidge at this conference.



Figure 2-7. Dedication of the Old Brick Capitol, 1922 (Library of Congress).

with the federal government to either retain the building or to receive adequate financial compensation. In 1928, with the help of Burnita Sheldon Matthews, who served as the NWP's legal counsel, a jury awarded the party \$299,200 in compensation. Although the amount was below the \$1 million that the NWP had argued the building was worth, it was the largest condemnation award given by the federal government at that time. As she had in 1921, Alva Belmont helped the party to purchase its next headquarters, a building at 144 B Street NE (later 144 Constitution Avenue NE). The party moved into the building, what would become its last and longest-lived headquarters, in October 1929.



Figure 2-8. Members of the new NWP meet with President Warren G. Harding on the ERA, 1921 (Library of Congress).

THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT. 1921-1929

When the National Woman's Party reorganized in 1921, it was around the goal of passing an amendment to the Constitution to guarantee equal rights for women. To Alice Paul and the party's inner circle, it was the logical sequel to the 19th Amendment, and it had the advantage of familiarity - replacing one single issue with another single issue, and in the familiar form of a constitutional amendment.

Following the 1921 convention, party officers and lawyers began drafting language for the new bill. Unlike the 19th Amendment, in which the wording had been determined long before the NWP was founded, the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) went through more than 180 internal versions before it was ready to be sent to Congress. The party also consulted with prominent legal scholars around the country, who expressed several concerns with the amendment. They believed that the party should pursue equal rights legislation in the state legislatures first, a strategy not likely to appeal to an organization that had rejected the state-by-state approach for the 19th Amendment.

The legal scholars also expressed concern that the ERA would jeopardize existing laws limiting working hours and guaranteeing minimum wages for women. These so-called protective laws were, in the absence of general worker protection laws during this period, seen as important in ensuring women's safety and welfare in employment. Initially, the NWP believed there was no conflict between the ERA and protective legislation. Over time, however, it became a major point of contention and alienated the party from many women's organizations who would otherwise be supportive of equal rights for women. By 1923, the NWP had

officially rejected the concept of protective legislation for women, arguing that it perpetuated sex discrimination and therefore was not protective at all. Women's trade and advocacy groups, including the National Women's Trade Union League, the National Consumers' League, and the League of Women Voters, formed the Women's Committee for Industrial Legislation in 1923 to oppose the Equal Rights Amendment. In 1926, the NWP participated in the Woman's Industrial Conference and attempted to include the ERA on the conference agenda. Although it was unsuccessful, the party did reach a compromise with the conference advisory committee, which agreed to work with the NWP on an investigation of industry and its effects on women. The resulting draft report, which was based on NWP data, concluded that women did not receive equal pay and were discriminated against in employment. Two years later, however, the final report issued by the Women's Bureau of Labor reversed the findings and supported protective legislation. Relations between the NWP and women's labor organizations remained strained until passage of the Fair Labor Standards Act in 1938 began to eliminate the need for protective legislation.

The NWP also failed to convince many Black women and men of the value of an equal rights amendment. In 1929, before the party held its biennial convention in Washington, DC, the Acting Secretary of the NAACP, Walter White, wrote an open letter to the party. Focusing on the ERA's language seeking "equal rights throughout the United States," White pointedly alluded to the NWP's failure to pursue equal voting rights for southern Black women. He continued,

For several million Colored women living in the South, it is important that the public should know definitely how the Woman's Party interprets the word "equal" as applied to them and to their rights under the proposed amendment... Do you interpret the words...to mean that black women should have equal voting rights with white citizens in Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, and South Carolina? As they do for instance, in New York, Pennsylvania and Illinois?...Or is this intended to be solely a white women's equality amendment?¹⁸

The ERA was first introduced in Congress in 1923. The NWP attempted to gain the endorsement of President Calvin Coolidge, but like Woodrow Wilson before him, Coolidge remained noncommittal. However, the NWP did not pursue the picketing strategy that had raised awareness of the Anthony Amendment in 1917. A significant element in the party's lobbying strategy was soliciting the endorsements of women's groups. Although it had little success with labor and trade groups, it did secure some key endorsements in the 1920s, including the American Association of University Women, the Washington Women's Legislative Council, and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

18 "Equal Rights Query for Woman's Party," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 7 December 1929:5.

Although the ERA was introduced in each congressional session throughout the 1920s, it remained largely mired within congressional subcommittees while the NWP worked to build support. Neither the Republican nor Democratic parties included the ERA in their party platforms in 1924 and 1928, although the 1928 platforms did include general language on the equality of women. It was also in 1928 that Representative Katherine Langley of Kentucky became the first woman in Congress to endorse the ERA, followed in 1929 by Representative Ruth Bryan Owen of Florida.



CHAPTER 3

NATIONAL WOMAN'S PARTY

1929-2016

CHAPTER 3: THE NATIONAL WOMAN'S PARTY, 1929-2016

With the help of its president, Alva Belmont, the NWP purchased its final headquarters at 144 Constitution Avenue NE in 1929, dedicated by the NWP as the Alva Belmont House and later known as the Sewall-Belmont House. Initially, the NWP thrived in its new headquarters, using its proximity to Congress to lobby for the Equal Rights Amendment, and welcoming members and guests to the house and garden for numerous party-related events and meetings. While the National Woman's Party remained the predominant feminist organization in the United States through and after World War II, it continued to lack diversity in its membership, failed to attract new members, and became largely insular. This allowed new women's organizations to overshadow the NWP and emerge as the leaders of the Equal Rights Amendment in the 1960s. Over the years, the NWP headquarters became the party's largest asset. In 1974, the NWP succeeded in designating the Belmont House as a National Historic Landmark, protecting it from demolition. With this designation came new obligations and a shift toward preserving the house and its collections, causing a major division in the party that ultimately changed the organization and its mission.

A NEW HEADQUARTERS AND THE CONTINUED FOCUS ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS, 1929-1945

THE ALVA BELMONT HOUSE - NEW HEADQUARTERS

On April 18, 1929, with the demolition of the "Old Brick Capitol" to make way for the Supreme Court building imminent, the National Woman's Party purchased a house at 144 B Street NE (now Constitution Avenue) from Senator Porter Hinman Dale and his wife, Augusta, and converted it into the party's new national headquarters.¹ The NWP celebrated the rich history of the property, which dated to 1632 when King Charles I granted the land to Cecil Calvert, second Lord Baltimore, as part of the English colony of Maryland. Eventually, Daniel Carroll of Duddington, one of the major owners of land within the future District of Columbia, inherited the land in 1773. In 1793 and 1799, after the establishment of the District of Columbia in 1790, Robert Sewall purchased the three lots on what

1 Ehrenkrantz Echstut & Kuhn Architects et al, *Sewall-Belmont House Historic Structure Report* (Washington, DC: National Woman's Party, 2001), 6.

is now the corner of Constitution Avenue and 2nd Street (Square 725, Lots 1, 2 and 32), constructing the original house by 1800.²

In 1814, during the course of the British invasion of Washington as part of the War of 1812, the British burned Sewall's house in retaliation for the shooting of foot soldiers and a beloved general's horse by United States soldiers who had taken refuge inside. The damage was such that future petitions to Congress for compensation described the house as "destroyed" and the requested sums suggested significant loss.³

Within a few years, Sewall completed enough repairs to the house to make it habitable. In 1820, Robert Sewall died in the house, and over the next 100 years it passed to his heirs. The house was modified several times in the late nineteenth century, including the conversion of the original gable roof to a partial mansard roof, and construction of a portico and steps as the primary entrance into the house from B Street.⁴

Porter Hinman Dale and his wife owned the house from 1922 to 1929, during Dale's tenure in the House of Representatives and Senate. The Dales undertook extensive renovations of the property, including enclosing the rear porch,

2 Ehrenkrantz Echstut & Kuhn Architects et al, *Sewall-Belmont House Historic Structure Report*, 3.

3 Ehrenkrantz Echstut & Kuhn Architects et al, *Sewall-Belmont House Historic Structure Report*, 13-15.

4 Ehrenkrantz Echstut & Kuhn Architects et al, *Sewall-Belmont House Historic Structure Report*, 30.



Figure 3-1. 1928 Street view of the Porter Dale House, later known as the Alva Belmont House (National Woman's Party, 1928).



Figure 3-2. View of B Street NE (now Constitution Avenue) and the Dale House in 1928, looking northeast (Historical Society of Washington).



Figure 3-3. View of the carriage house behind the Belmont House and two rowhouses to the north of the Sewall-Belmont House, 1929. This photograph was likely taken shortly after the National Woman's Party purchased the property and may have been used to show Alva Belmont the appearance of the two rowhouses and rear building (National Woman's Party).

constructing a retaining wall along the south property boundary, and creating a more enclosed, private garden for entertaining. In particular, the Dales were known for their rose garden.⁵

In addition to the property on Lots 1, 2, and 32 of Square 725, the National Woman's Party purchased two adjacent lots fronting 2nd Street to the north of the house, with the intention of using them for additional housing, offices, and

⁵ Ehrenkrantz Echstut & Kuhn Architects et al, *Sewall-Belmont House Historic Structure Report*, 32, 45.

meeting space. The NWP purchased Deed Lot A (also known as Lot 864), located at 212 2nd Street immediately north of Lot 32, from Print Cranfield on May 14, 1929. The party purchased Lot B (also known as Lot 863), located at 214 2nd Street, from Ada McKinley on May 15, 1929. The lots contained matching row houses with bay windows and mansard roofs.⁶

Upon acquiring the property, the NWP renovated the buildings to include the office, meeting, dining, and bedroom spaces needed to serve the organization. Members created the House Remodeling Committee to direct the alterations to the main house as well as the two adjacent row houses, and selected interior decorator Madeleine McCandless for the project.⁷ The renovation added new windows to the east and west walls of the main house to increase light into the working and living spaces.⁸ The project also replaced the sleeping porch, located along the west side of the rear kitchen wing and constructed by the Dales, with a longer one-story open rear porch, also referred to as the terrace.⁹ Consistent with Alva Belmont's vision for the property, the NWP also modified the portico. In correspondence to Miss Maude Younger, Belmont described that "We should enter the old building on the level of the sidewalk taking down the outside steps leading to the present front door."¹⁰ Photographs of the house indicate that the upper portion of the portico was removed between 1929 and 1935.

Plans for the renovations and other information provide some insight as to how the NWP initially used the rooms in the house. The basement, now accessible from the street, contained at least one office, with new windows cut to provide light. On the first floor of the center hall house, the front west room served as the drawing room while the front east room on the opposite side of the hall was known as the Council Room. The rear west room was a library and the NWP added an exterior door to the west wall of this room to provide direct access to the garden. The rear east room served as the dining room. Upstairs there were four bedrooms on the second floor and three on the third floor. The adjacent house at 212 2nd Street likely held offices and additional bedrooms.¹¹

6 Ehrenkrantz Echstut & Kuhn Architects et al, *Sewall-Belmont House Historic Structure Report*, 33.

7 Ehrenkrantz Echstut & Kuhn Architects et al, *Sewall-Belmont House Historic Structure Report*, 33.

8 Ehrenkrantz Echstut & Kuhn Architects et al, *Sewall-Belmont House Historic Structure Report*, 35-36.

9 Ehrenkrantz Echstut & Kuhn Architects et al, *Sewall-Belmont House Historic Structure Report*, 37.

10 Alva E. Belmont to Miss Maude Younger, 4 June 1929 (NWP II: 72).

11 Ehrenkrantz Echstut & Kuhn Architects et al, *Sewall-Belmont House Historic Structure Report*, Historic Structure Report, 36.



Figure 3-4. 1931 dedication of the Alva Belmont House as the National Woman's Party Headquarters (Library of Congress, National Woman's Party Papers).

The NWP formally dedicated the Alva Belmont House as the “citadel of woman’s independence” on January 4, 1931, at 1:30 in the afternoon with “music and banners” and “recollections of the past and promises for the future” (Figure 3-4). As *Equal Rights* later reported,

A boy’s band with a stirring air gave notice to the assemblage gathered in the bright sunlight on the street in front of the balcony-like entrance to the Alva Belmont House that the dedication was about to begin. Arthur S. Whitcomb, cornetist of the United States Marine Band, sounded the bugle call, and a procession of young women in purple, white, and gold robes. . . marched across the entrance carrying the famous banners of the Woman’s Party, led by that banner which has led so many processions of the National Woman’s Party -- ‘Forward out of darkness, leave behind the night, forward out of error, forward into light.’ As the procession made its beautiful way the chimes of the Marine Band were played by Wilbur D. Kieffer, second leader of the Marine band, and the Capital Choir, led by Dr. Walter Harned, sang “Forward Into Light.”¹²

At the dedication, NWP members unveiled a bronze plaque on the facade of the house with the name “Alva Belmont House” (Figure 3-5). The event also featured speeches by Senator James E. Watson of Indiana and Senator T. H. Caraway

¹² Ruby A. Black, “Alva Belmont House is Dedicated,” *Equal Rights*, 10 January 1931.



Figure 3-5. Unveiling of the plaque at the 1931 dedication of the Alva Belmont House (*Equal Rights*, January 10, 1931).

of Arkansas, which were broadcast nationwide by the National Broadcasting Company and heard by NWP President Alva Belmont, who was in Paris and not able to attend due to health reasons. The NWP also transmitted a greeting from Mrs. Belmont, who said, “May this house which you have dedicated to me, be the source where all future inspirations for our work may start and end in triumph.” As part of the dedication, Belmont donated \$10,000 toward an “Equal Rights Auditorium,” to be constructed in the future as part of the Belmont House.¹³

A celebratory dinner at the Washington Hotel closed the day’s activities. On the Sunday afternoon following the dedication, the District of Columbia branch of the NWP entertained guests at a tea held at the Belmont House. The following Monday, a deputation of NWP members attended a hearing before a subcommittee of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary and asked President Herbert Hoover to support the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment “as a means of preventing great and unfair injustice to women during the unemployment crisis.”¹⁴

In the January 3, 1929, edition of *Equal Rights*, published before the formal dedication, NWP director of national activities Muna Lee praised Alva Belmont and emphasized her influence within the women’s movement and the importance of the new NWP headquarters:

The various interests that have played an important part in Mrs. Belmont’s life are finely synthesized in the national headquarters which, bearing her name, is

13 Ruby A. Black, “Alva Belmont House is Dedicated,” *Equal Rights*, 10 January 1931.

14 “Dinner Climaxes Festivities,” *Equal Rights*, 10 January 1931; “Passage of Amendment Demanded,” *Equal Rights*, 10 January 1931; “National Headquarters to Be Dedicated,” *Equal Rights*, 27 December 1930.”

dedicated to the greater freedom of women. It epitomizes Feminism, of course, since it is the home of the most advanced Feminist group in the country; it recalls her devotion to architecture, for so long one of her chief delights, since Alva Belmont House is a classic example of the gracious, dignified Georgian mansion. . . Her flair for gardens - and her gardens have been internationally famous - is simply but pleasingly exemplified in the roses and lilacs, the poplars and laurels and iris-beds, which give this house so much of its Old World charm. . .¹⁵

The NWP's headquarters at the Belmont House quickly became the nucleus for all of the NWP's national activities in Washington, including the location for meetings of the NWP's national council. It also became a place where the NWP could recruit new members and women could gather. In August 1930, *Equal Rights* announced that the garden would be open every Sunday to members and that the "open house" invitation included "bridge-foursomes looking for a pleasant place to play." The NWP also hosted Sunday teas, organized by members from the District of Columbia Branch by the NWP.¹⁶ Not long after the purchase of the property, the NWP began holding "At Homes" on Tuesday evenings at the Belmont House. At one of these events in November 1930, members and friends came to the house to listen to election returns on the radio, play contract and auction bridge, "and just to talk and listen." Members set one room aside for bridge, another for conversation. The event also featured live music.¹⁷ In addition to teas, the NWP held dinner programs and banquets. In October 1932,

15 Muna Lee, "Alva Belmont House," *Equal Rights* 3 January 1931.

16 "News from the Field," *Equal Rights*, 2 August 1930; "News from the Field," *Equal Rights*, 8 November 1930.

17 "News from the Field," *Equal Rights*, 8 November 1930.

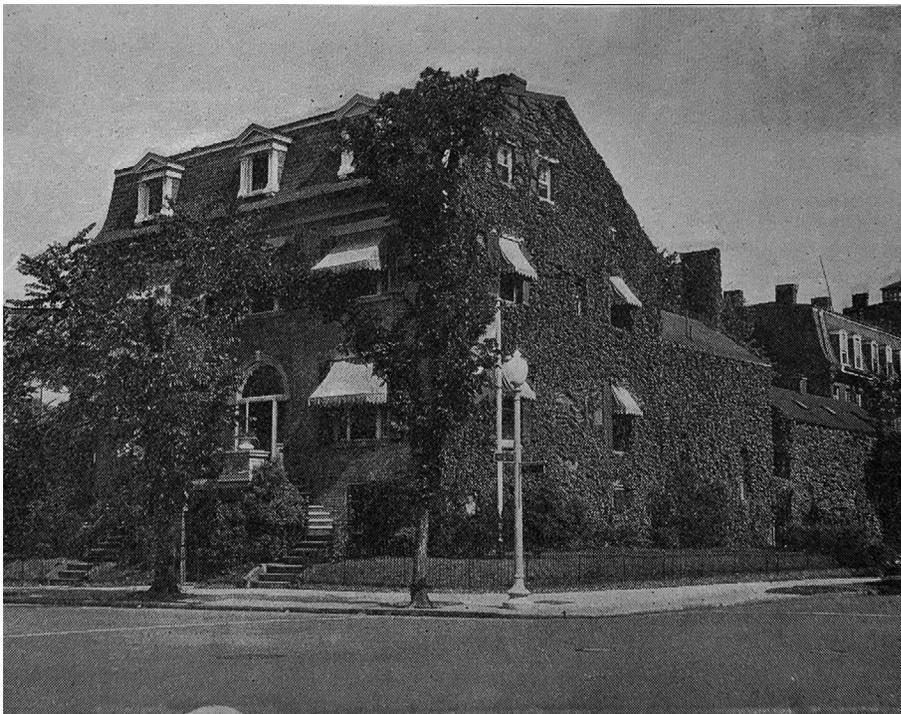


Figure 3-6. The vine-covered Alva Belmont House in 1933 (*Equal Rights*, August 5, 1933).

for example, the NWP offered a dinner program every Tuesday for members “interested in Spanish-speaking America.” Dinner guests included “an official from Central or South America” who would “discuss equality laws in his country,” followed by a class in Spanish.¹⁸

Records indicate that the NWP also welcomed federal employees who worked nearby, including members of Congress and their staff, to enjoy the house’s garden. The August 5, 1933, issue of *Equal Rights* featured a photograph of the ivy-covered house with the caption:

Vine-covered, standing high upon Capitol Hill, there are few places where the summer heat of Washington is felt as little as in this spacious old house. Members of the House and Senate, officials of the Congressional Library, men and women prominent in the life of the nation’s Capital, may frequently be seen in its flowering garden, one of the few places within the city arranged for dining-out-of-doors. Just now it is particularly lovely and in the evening those who have dined often linger on under the trees for conference of relaxation (Figure 3-6).¹⁹

The NWP urged members and their friends to make the Belmont House their home while spending time in Washington. For those who stayed, everything was “done to make guests comfortable and to help them accomplish whatever their object may be in coming to Washington.” In 1933, the NWP rented rooms for two dollars a day and offered special rates for prolonged stays. During nice weather, guests had their meals in the garden. In addition to being close to the Capitol and House and Senate offices, the house was near a streetcar line for those visiting government offices downtown. For those with cars, parking was unlimited around the house. *Equal Rights* also reported that NWP National Chairman Florence Bayard Hilles often brought down great stalks of Egyptian lotus from her Delaware garden, which she would place in a great urn in the garden of the Belmont House. “They have given added joy to the hundreds of Washingtonians who are finding that the National Woman’s Party garden on Capitol Hill offers something unique to its visitors.”²⁰

The NWP continued to make adjustments to the property during the 1930s to best fit its needs. Between 1931 and 1936, the NWP connected the former carriage house (now the library wing), to the kitchen wing, filling in what had previously been a space between the two that may have served as a route between the street and the garden.²¹ By the late 1930s, the former carriage house served as the

18 “News from the Field,” *Equal Rights*, 15 October 1932.

19 “The Alva Belmont House in Summer,” *Equal Rights*, 5 August 1933.

20 “Come to Washington Headquarters,” *Equal Rights*, 5 August 1933.

21 Photographs from the early 1940s illustrate this transformation.

“Coach House Tea Room,” which was open to the public for meals and afternoon tea.²² The NWP may have also built a “sunken terrace,” located on the north side of the enclosed terrace and west side of the former carriage house, at this time to allow for outdoor dining adjacent to the tea room.²³ Drawings HP-2 and HP-3 below (developed as part of the concurrent Cultural Landscape Assessment) illustrate the known aspects of the house and landscape during the Dales’ ownership between 1922 and 1929 and the condition and changes made during the NWP’s ownership between 1929 and 1972.

On January 26, 1933, Alva Belmont died at her home in Paris at the age of 80. At the Belmont House in Washington, the NWP flew its flag at half mast “in token of the sorrow in the hearts of her followers.”²⁴ Alice Paul attended Belmont’s funeral in Paris and in February, Paul and other NWP members traveled to New York for Alva Belmont’s funeral and later burial at Woodlawn Cemetery. Before her death, Alva Belmont had expressed her wish to be surrounded by women who had taken part in the “struggle for independence which she had for many years shared so intimately and conspicuously.” As reported by *Equal Rights*, “In St. Thomas’ Church and also at the graveside in Woodlawn Cemetery, the leaders of the NWP and hundreds of others who had worked beside them in the ranks pledged anew their loyalty to a great and courageous American and at the same time to the principle of justice and truth that motivated her life.” At the church, “Feminist sentinels,” holding the purple, white, and gold banners of the NWP, guarded Belmont’s casket day and night before the funeral (Figure 3-7). At the head of the casket was Belmont’s favorite banner with the words “Failure is Impossible.” At the cemetery, a procession of women carrying NWP banners preceded the funeral cortege to the mausoleum. Besides immediate family, only Alice Paul entered the burial vault.²⁵

When describing the purpose of the Alva Belmont House before its dedication in 1931, member Muna Lee stated, “Alva Belmont House will be, through the years to come, a museum and a laboratory of Feminism: a museum in that most vital sense of the word, a storehouse of the past lending inspiration for the present; and a laboratory where the elements which will form the future are determined and tested.”²⁶ Beginning in 1940, NWP furthered these goals with the establishment of a committee, headed by former NWP Chairman Florence Bayard Hilles, to convert the carriage house behind the Belmont House into a library. Architect

22 “The Olde Coach House,” *Equal Rights*, 1 April 1936: 3.

23 “Historic Garden at Headquarters Transformed,” *Equal Rights*, 15 September 1937, 132.

24 “Mrs. Belmont Dies at Paris Home,” *Equal Rights*, 4 February 1933.

25 “Party Renews Its Faith at Belmont Bier,” *Equal Rights*, 18 February 1933.

26 Muna Lee, “Alva Belmont House,” *Equal Rights*, 3 January 1931.



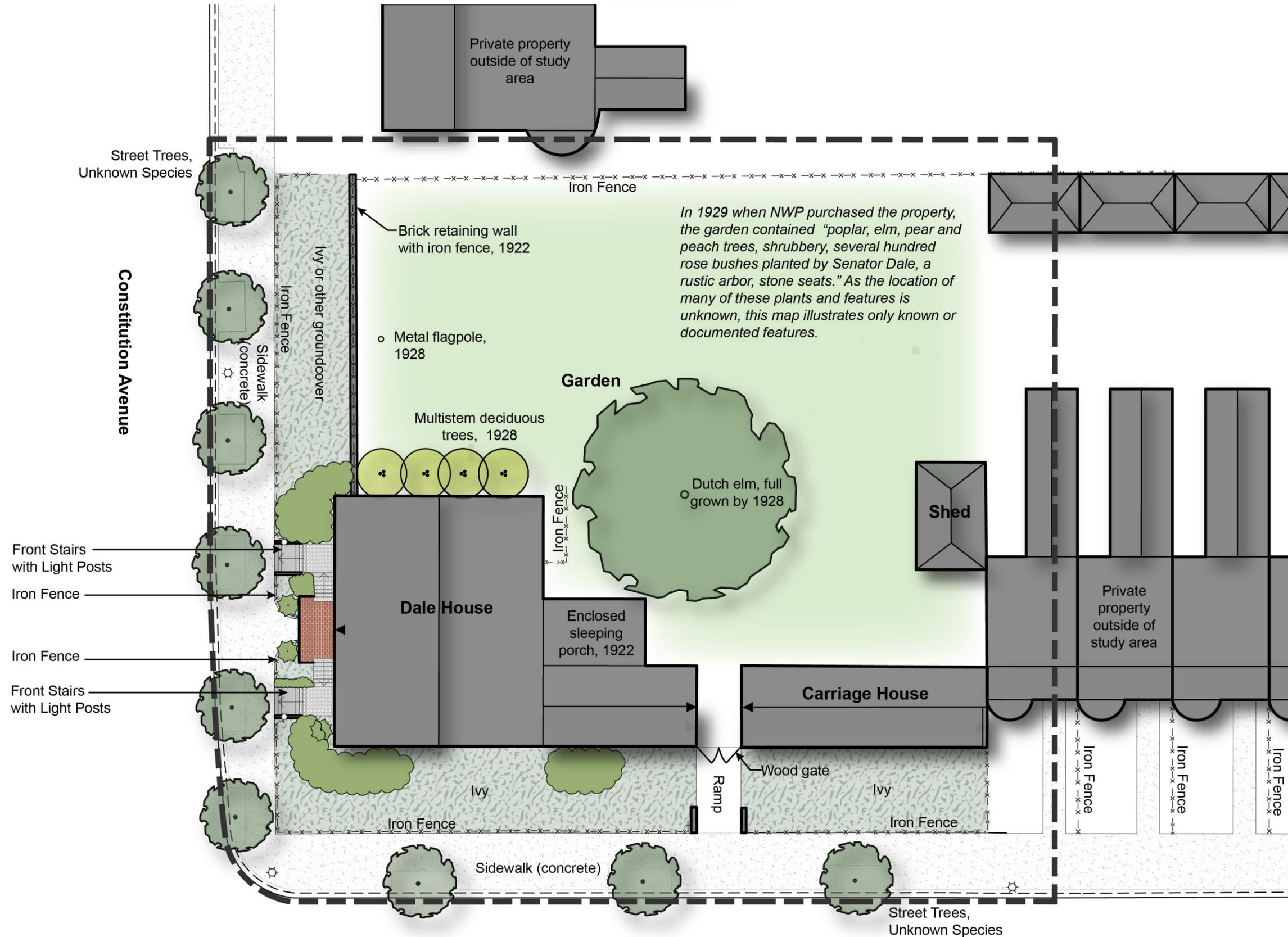
Figure 3-7. Members of the NWP, “feminist sentinels,” at the funeral of Alva Belmont at St. Thomas Church, February 1933 (Library of Congress).

Elise duPont, member of the NWP’s Delaware chapter, designed the new library. The NWP completed the conversion of the building to a library by October 1941, and Mary Elizabeth Downey, former librarian of the US Constitution Sesquicentennial Commission, installed the collection and served as the NWP’s librarian.

The nucleus of the library was the private collection of Alva Belmont, the most valuable being her journals on the suffrage and equal rights movements, which had been in storage since her death in 1933.²⁷ With the help of Downey, additional donations of materials including manuscripts, biographies, speeches, and articles, came from NWP members and others from across the country. Downey also initiated an educational program of teas, lectures, and book discussions. On November 12, 1941, the NWP formally dedicated the new library as the Alva Belmont Feminist Library, the first feminist library in the United States. The

²⁷ “Alva Belmont Feminist Library Dedicated,” *Equal Rights*, November 1941; National Woman’s Party, “Our Story,” accessed 5 May 2020 at <https://www.nationalwomansparty.org/our-story>.

1922-1928 Landscape Condition

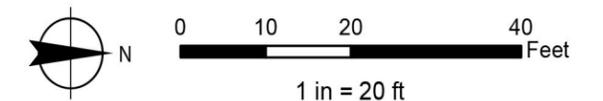


Legend

- Study Area Boundary
- Building
- Retaining Wall
- Road Edge and Curb
- Brick Walkway
- Concrete Walkway
- Aggregate Walkway
- Stone Walkway
- Deciduous Tree
- Ornamental Tree
- Shrub
- Groundcover
- Iron Fence
- Building Entrance
- Streetlight
- 1 Foot Contour

Notes and Sources

1. Ehrenkrantz Echstut & Kuhn Architects et al. *The Sewall-Belmont House Historic Structure Report*. Washington, DC, 2001.
2. Multiple Photographs, Library of Congress, National Woman's Party Papers.
3. Multiple Photographs, Historical Society of Washington.
4. Only details confirmed by photographic evidence are illustrated.
5. Quote from "The Feminists Capture a Landmark," *Washington Post*, 15 September, 1929.



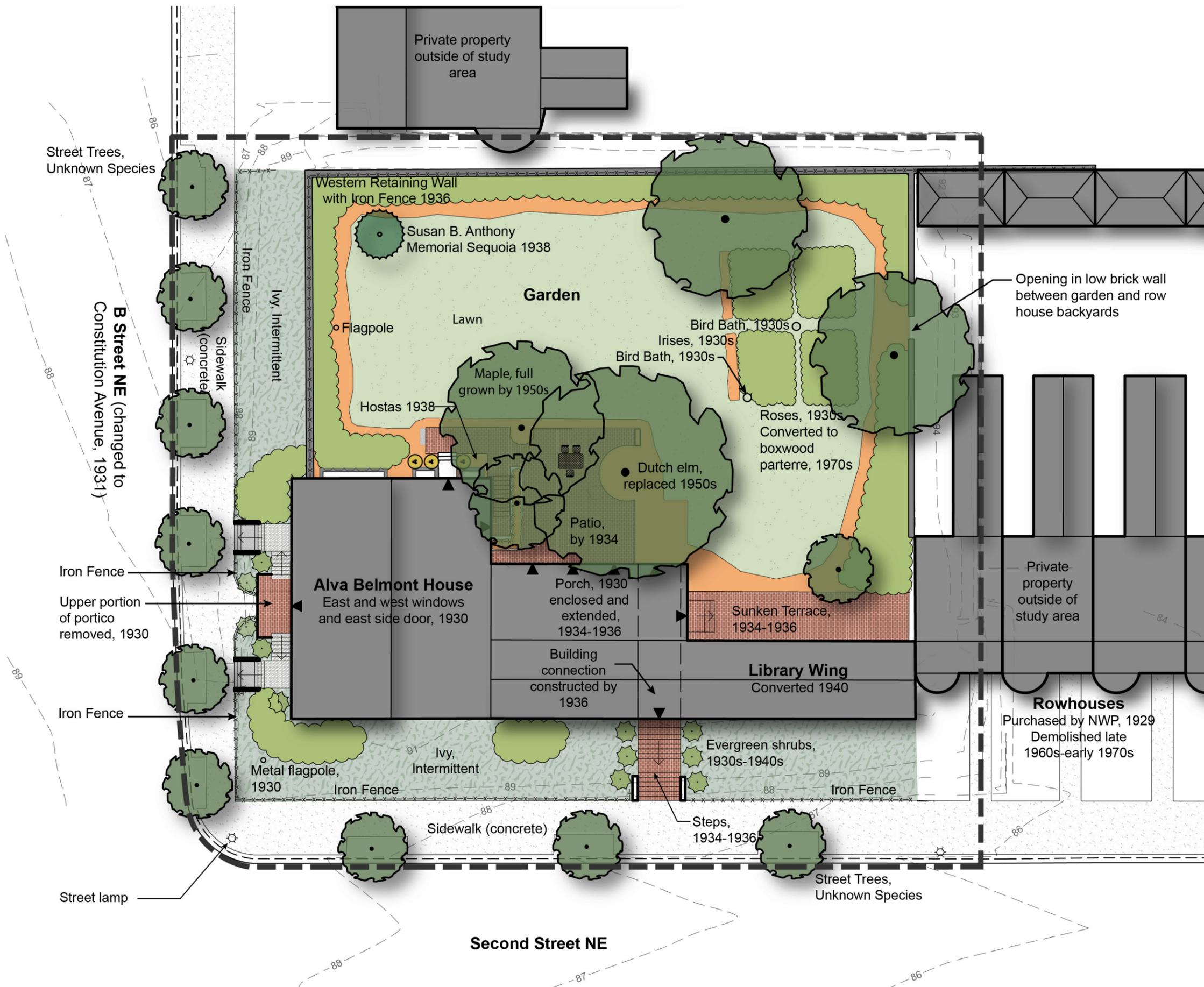
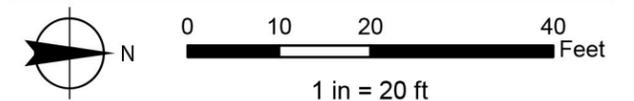
1929- 1972 Landscape Condition

Legend

-  Study Area Boundary
-  Building
-  Retaining Wall
-  Road Edge and Curb
-  Brick Walkway
-  Concrete Walkway
-  Aggregate Walkway
-  Stone Walkway
-  Deciduous Tree
-  Evergreen Tree
-  Ornamental Tree
-  Shrub
-  Perennial Planting
-  Lawn
-  Groundcover
-  Wood Lattice Fence
-  Iron Fence
-  Building Entrance
-  Streetlight
-  1 Foot Contour
-  Lawn Furniture

Notes and Sources

1. Ehrenkrantz Echstut & Kuhn Architects et al. *The Sewall-Belmont House Historic Structure Report*. Washington, DC, 2001.
2. Multiple Photographs, Library of Congress, National Woman's Party Papers.
3. Multiple Photographs, Historical Society of Washington.
4. Only details confirmed by photographic evidence are illustrated.
5. Historic photographs indicate that garden furniture (tables and chairs) was varied and moved to accommodate specific events.



B Street NE (changed to Constitution Avenue, 1931)

Second Street NE

library was open every Saturday from 2:30PM to 4:30PM, when Downey was present, and at other times by appointment.²⁸

The library quickly became a popular research institution and a source of pride for the party. On December 12, 1943, the NWP rededicated the library as the Florence Bayard Hilles Library in honor of Hilles, one of the country's leading feminists. Hilles was one of the founders of the NWP, picketed the White House alongside Alice Paul, and continued to lead the NWP with her support of the ERA. In an interview after its establishment, Hilles emphasized the importance of the library:

The fact that this library is established shows the need for it. In the average library one does not find specialists training along one line. Here students of the woman movement will have free access under expert direction to records of the women's activities stretching over a century. . . The stipulation made by Mrs. Belmont was that the collection be housed in a fireproof building, and the old coach house of the beautiful grounds she had given seemed perfect. In its present dress, it is mellow and has every pleasant characteristic of a charming library. That requests for material and information are coming from all over the United States is an indication of the general interest.²⁹

A 1944 article by Downey described the appearance of the library:

28 "Alva Belmont Feminist Library Dedicated," *Equal Rights*, November 1941; National Woman's Party, "Our Story," accessed 5 May 2020 at <https://www.nationalwomansparty.org/our-story>.

29 Mary Elizabeth Downey, "The New Feminist Library in Washington," *Library Journal*, 1 March 1944.



Figure 3-8. The Florence Bayard Hilles Library at the Belmont House, 1944 (*Library Journal*).

Its long, narrow proportions seem admirably adapted to be converted into a library. . . Below its oyster-white ceiling are shelves of French blue flanked by French windows, with deep rose Venetian blinds. At the far end of the room is a charming colonial fireplace in black, surmounted by a mantle with a portrait of Mrs. Hilles as its only ornament, which is a ceiling-high mirror. The high arched ceiling, the brick-tiled floor with its rugs, the two huge carved tables, originally in the Library of Congress, appropriate chairs and soft lights create a restful, artistic atmosphere conducive to study. A colonial doorway with a charming old fan light, a long tiled terrace with French doors opening on a lovely old garden, form the two approaches to the library (Figure 3-8).³⁰

THE ERA AND OTHER LEGISLATIVE EFFORTS

The effort to pass an Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution reached several important milestones in the period between 1929 and 1945. Although the amendment was reintroduced in both Houses of Congress in every session during those fifteen years, it struggled to move past the subcommittees of the House and Senate Judiciary Committees, where it was assigned. The National Woman's Party pursued several strategies to build support for the amendment, including lobbying individual members of Congress, securing the endorsement of local, state, and national women's organizations, and educating the public.

In Congress, the chair of the House Judiciary Committee repeatedly blocked the amendment in the House for many years. Internally, the party varied its strategy, sometimes focusing on the judiciary committees, and other times pursuing a more diffused grassroots campaign in the states. The party saw endorsements from women's organizations as a key part of its strategy, an effort that began to bear fruit in the late 1930s as more and more organizations supported the ERA. By the end of the period, the party had secured endorsements from more than 30 national women's organizations as well as hundreds of state and local groups. The passage of the Fair Labor Standards Act in 1938 (upheld by the Supreme Court in 1941) helped to eliminate one of the major obstacles to the ERA, the perceived need for protective labor legislation for women. By the early 1940s the party had built considerable political support for the amendment. After intense lobbying at each national party convention, the Equal Right Amendment was included as a plank in both major political party platforms, first by the Republicans in 1940, then the Democrats in 1944. In 1945, it was endorsed by the new president, Harry S. Truman, and over 30 state governors, and for the first time, the amendment had secured favorable reports from both the House and Senate Judiciary Committees.

The party still faced significant opposition, particularly from women's labor and trade groups, as well as Catholic organizations. While many labor organizations believed in equality for women, they did not agree with the NWP's method of a

³⁰ Mary Elizabeth Downey, "The New Feminist Library in Washington," *Library Journal*, 1 March 1944.

constitutional amendment. Many believed that the ERA would ultimately hurt women by eliminating protective legislation, including the hard-won minimum wage and maximum hours laws. Those in support of the ERA believed that these laws discriminated against women. This conflict “centered on the best way for women to win equal rights and involved a dispute over the fundamental meaning of equality.”³¹

Although the NWP was used to facing opposition, some members found that the immediate reaction to the name National Woman's Party was “indistinctive antagonism.” As explained by member Vee Terrys Perlman in 1933,

For to the general public, and by that I mean all the millions of people outside the membership of the National Woman's Party and those persons directly contacted by them, our present name connotes a group of women who are anxious to reverse the traditional position of the sexes. Everyone but ourselves and those comparative few whom we have educated assumes that the object of the [NWP] is to obtain preferment, advantages and glory for women at the expense of men, or at least without any regard to the just claims and capabilities of men. They assume that we are out to achieve the dominance of woman while relegating man to woman's erstwhile yoke of subjection. Naturally, men resent it and women fear it.”

Perlman suggested that the NWP changes its name to the “Equal Rights Party,” which would provoke the question “Haven't women Equal Rights now?” and provide an opportunity for explanation as well as help with publicity.³²

Despite the criticism from women's labor groups, the National Woman's Party continued to lobby for labor reform, especially during the Great Depression, which had a particularly devastating impact on working women. Women were the first to lose their jobs and many plants, offices, factories, as well as state governments dismissed women from their jobs or reinstated old regulations prohibiting women from working at night. The NWP launched a nationwide campaign in protest of laws and regulations that allowed the dismissal of women from jobs based on marital status or job conditions.³³

In addition to protesting the dismissal of women workers, the NWP continued to advocate for equality in labor legislation. The NWP opposed protective legislation

31 Leila J. Rupp, “The Survival of American Feminism: The Women's Movement in the Postwar Period,” in *Reshaping America*, Robert H. Bremner and Gary W. Reicard, eds. (Ohio State University Press, 1982), 40.

32 Vee Terrys Perlman, “Shall the Name of the Woman's Party Be Changed, *Equal Rights*, 10 June 1933.

33 Thomas C. Pardo, ed., *The National Woman's Party Papers 1913-1974* (Sanford, North Carolina: 1979), 43.

that was only for women, yet maintained a neutral position on the need for fair labor standards and societal remedies for the Great Depression. When the National League of Women Voters launched a campaign for an eight-hour work day law for women, the NWP opposed the legislation and aligned with several business and professional women's groups to defeat the League's measures in several states. The NWP also applied pressure to other state legislatures, effectively postponing the vote on the measure.³⁴

In the support of working women, the NWP and its Government Worker's Council fought to repeal Section 213 of the Legislative Appropriations Act of 1932. Also known as the Economy Act, the act prohibited federal employees from working for the government when their spouses were also government employees, which disproportionately impacted women. On July 9, 1933, the NWP held an event at the Sylvan Theater near the Washington Monument. In front of a crowd of about 5,000 people, the NWP presented a resolution to President Franklin D. Roosevelt that asked him to "end the continued discrimination against married women in government service." The event opened with a procession of women carrying banners from the Washington Monument and down the slope to the Sylvan Theater while the Marine Band played. The flags carried the names of leaders of the women's movement and included one flag "To Unknown Women."³⁵ After five years of organized lobbying, Congress repealed Section 213 in 1937. The party also was successful in eliminating sex discrimination clauses in the codes of the National Recovery Administration, President Roosevelt's New Deal agency established to stimulate business recovery during the Great Depression, in 1933 and 1934.³⁶

In May 1938, the NWP achieved a major legislative victory with the passage of the Fair Labor Standards Act that established for the first time federal wage and hour guidelines for all workers, regardless of sex. The NWP's involvement in lobbying for the act proved to other women's organizations that the party was not only concerned about the rights of business and professional women, but was truly concerned about equal rights in labor legislation. Most importantly, the passage of the Fair Labor Standards Act began to change the attitude of some prominent government officials in support of protective legislation for women. Ultimately, the Fair Labor Standards Act demonstrated to the NWP and others that the "time was right for equality in labor legislation, if not overdue."³⁷

34 Pardo, *The National Woman's Party Papers*, 44.

35 "Plead for Wives Holding U.S. Jobs," *Evening Star*, 9 July 1933:1.

36 Pardo, *The National Woman's Party Papers*, 3-4, 43.

37 Pardo, *The National Woman's Party Papers*, 90.



Figure 3-9. “The National Woman’s Party in Washington was all agog today [April 3, 1930] as Mrs. Harvey W. Wiley telephoned Miss Doris Stevens, chairman of the Inter-American Commission of Women at the Hague, to ascertain whether the World Code now being drawn up by the Codification Conference of International Law will be based on sex discrimination. In the photograph, left to right: Miss Anita Pollitzer of South Carolina; Mrs. Harvey W. Wiley; Miss Alice Paul; and Miss Elsie Hill of Connecticut” (Library of Congress).

INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS OF THE NATIONAL WOMAN’S PARTY

In the late 1920s and 1930s, Alice Paul and NWP continued to recognize that the “second class” legal status of women was an international issue and devoted a great amount of time and energy to fighting for women’s rights worldwide. After the establishment of the Inter-American Commission of Women (IACW), in 1929 and until 1938, the NWP had considerable influence on the IACW. Prominent NWP member Doris Stevens was the chairman of the IACW during its first 10 years of operation and Alice Paul and other members served on its Nationality Committee (Figure 3-9). The NWP influenced the IACW’s policy reports and recommendations, evidenced by the drafting of the Equal Nationality Treaty and the Equal Rights Treaty, as well as its commitment to expand women’s civil and political rights. The NWP’s involvement in the IACW ended in 1938 after disputes surrounding the ouster of Doris Stevens as chairman and the permanent seating of members on the commission.³⁸

In September 1930, representatives from the NWP and the IACW, representing women of the 21 republics of the Western Hemisphere, took part in a series of conferences in Geneva. The conferences resulted in the establishment of a new international organization of women known as the Equal Rights International. The purpose of the Equal Rights International was to “work for Equal Rights

³⁸ Pardo, *The National Woman’s Party Papers*, 4.

for Women throughout the world by endeavoring to obtain the allegiance of all nations” to the Equal Rights Treaty, drafted by Alice Paul and first proposed by Doris Stevens, Jane Norman Smith, and other members of the NWP at the Pan-American Conference in 1928. The treaty included the simple statement that “the contracting States agree that upon the ratification of this treaty, men and women shall have Equal Rights throughout the territory subject to their respective jurisdictions.” International chairman of the Equal Rights International Helen A. Archdale of Great Britain stated that the organization was “the outcome of a realization by women of many different nations that progress of every form is international, and that the position of women in one country is affected profoundly by their status in all others.”³⁹

Along with other women’s organizations, the NWP continued to lobby for the adoption of nationality legislation that eliminated discrimination against women in the areas of citizenship rights, marriage to an alien, residence in a foreign land, and determination of citizenship status for children in a marriage with an alien. Achievements of the NWP include the passage of revisions to the 1922 Cable Act in 1930 and 1931 as well as the Dickstein-Copeland bill in 1934. Drafted by Alice Paul, the Dickstein-Copeland bill made a woman’s citizenship independent of her husband’s citizenship. Previously, American women who married a foreign national were forced to assume their husband’s nationality and lose their United States citizenship.⁴⁰ In 1934, the NWP accomplished a major victory when President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Equal Nationality Treaty.⁴¹ The new nationality law made “no distinction between men and women with regard to the right to take United States nationality by birth or naturalization.”⁴²

With the expansion of the NWP’s interests outside the United States, the Belmont House served as a venue to welcome international women and for related events. Women of color from abroad often visited the Belmont House as the NWP expanded its efforts internationally. These women were proudly featured in photographs on the cover of *Equal Rights*. In July 1930, *Equal Rights* reported “East and West Meet in Feminism,” as Malati Patwardhan, Secretary of the Women’s Indian Association visited the Belmont House during her visit

39 “Equal Rights International Organized,” *Equal Rights*, 27 September 1930.

40 Pardo, *The National Woman’s Party Papers*, 3-4.

41 Pardo, *The National Woman’s Party Papers*, 3-4.

42 Inter-American Commission of Women, *Statement Interpreting the Laws of the United States with Respect to the Political and Civil Rights of Women Compared to the Political and Civil Rights of Men* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1936), 3-4; Lester B. Orfield, “The Citizen Act of 1934,” accessed 10 September 2020 at <https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1253&context=uclev>.



Figure 3-10. "East and West Meet in Feminism." Malati Patwardhan, greeted by NWP Hospitality Chairman Mrs. Paul Linebarger, on the front steps of the Belmont House, 1930 (*Equal Rights*, July 5, 1930).

to Washington to speak on the women of India⁴³ (Figure 3-10). In August 1930, Mrs. Camilo Osias, wife of one of the Resident Commissioners of the Philippine Islands in Washington, DC, was the speaker at the July tea in the garden of the Belmont House.⁴⁴ The NWP hosted Indian feminist and attorney Cordelia Sorabji and Chilean feminist Delia Ducoing de Arrate at the Belmont House in November 1930.⁴⁵ While many of these visitors were women of color, there is little evidence of efforts of the NWP to include and fight for the rights of American women of color during this time, continuing its failure to include Black women in its quest for equal rights.

World Woman's Party

At the December 1937 biennial NWP convention, held at the Belmont House, delegates discussed Alice Paul's proposal for a new, independent international women's organization that would be similar to the NWP, but with the sole

43 "East and West Meet in Feminism," *Equal Rights*, 5 July 1930.

44 "News from the Field," *Equal Rights*, 2 August 1930.

45 "News from the Field," *Equal Rights*, 8 November 1930.

Figure 3-11. Baroness Ebba Nordenfelt, left, Swedish feminist and member of the recently organized World Woman's Party, laying a wreath before the Portrait Monument to Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony by Adelaide Johnson, located in the US Capitol. The Baroness was in Washington on 26 November 1938 to make plans for Sweden's participation in the World Woman's Party meeting at its new headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland (Library of Congress).



purpose of fighting for women's equality around the world. The new organization would allow the NWP to independently lobby before various international governmental organizations instead of working on behalf of international women's rights as an affiliated organization as it had done in the past. More importantly, Alice Paul's desire for a worldwide organization was a response to the rise of totalitarianism in Europe that threatened the recent advancements made toward equal rights. Specifically, the totalitarian governments in Italy, Germany, and Spain were rescinding women's civil, political, and economic rights. As fascism and Nazism spread across Europe, Paul "felt that it was time for a new international organization to counter such threats to modern womanhood and inspire women to continue the fight for universal equality."⁴⁶

After the 1937 NWP biennial conference, Alice Paul continued to gain support for her new international women's organization. She spent most of 1937 conferring with international feminists on the idea and received favorable responses. She also secured a headquarters for the new organization in Geneva, Switzerland, located at Villa Bartholini on Lake Lemman, a short distance from the International Labor Organization offices. When Alice Paul returned to the United States in the fall of 1938, she formally presented her idea for the organization at the NWP's biennial convention in Detroit. Impressed by Paul's proposal, delegates urged the National Council to establish the organization. On November 19 and 20, the NWP officially

46 Pardo, *The National Woman's Party Papers*, 88.

incorporated the World Woman's Party (WWP) at the Belmont House. The NWP became the American branch of the organization.⁴⁷

Between 1938 and 1942, Alice Paul led the new WWP as its chairman. Similar to the NWP's state chapters, the WWP established national chapters in countries including Australia, Austria, Chile, China, Columbia, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Great Britain, Hungary, India, Ireland, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Puerto Rico, Sweden, Switzerland, and Yugoslavia. In 1940, Equal Rights International merged with the WWP. Consequently, the organization became the World's Women's Party for Equal Rights. After the onset of World War II, the WWP sidelined its political work and assisted European feminists and their families who had fled from the Nazis. The WWP's headquarters at Villa Bartholini became a refugee center for numerous WWP members and other European women. In addition to providing temporary shelter to women, the WWP assisted in securing passports, guaranteeing safe passage to the United States, finding employment and permanent residence, and resolving legal issues related to citizenship status. Eventually problems caused by the Nazis, including telephone and telegraph interference and the difficulty of members in crossing the Swiss border to attend WWP functions, forced the WWP to cease its refugee operations in Switzerland. In the spring of 1941, the WWP moved its headquarters to the Belmont House in Washington for the remainder of the war and continued to work on nationality and refugee cases of women and their families who came to the United States as a result of the war. In 1945, the WWP moved its headquarters to New York City and resumed its equality campaign by successfully lobbying for the inclusion of equality provisions within the United Nations Charter. The WWP ceased operations in 1954.⁴⁸

MEMBERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES

While the NWP thrived in its new headquarters at the Belmont House, overall membership in the NWP declined in the 1930s. At its peak during the suffrage movement in 1919-1920, the NWP had approximately 35,000 to 60,000 members. Membership in the NWP and other women's organizations generally dropped after the passage of the 19th Amendment. Many members, such as Alice Paul's Congressional Union co-founder Lucy Burns, thought that it was time for the next generation to take over, and withdrew from the women's movement.⁴⁹ By 1930, the NWP had around 12,000 members and 35 state chapters. One of the continuing problems of the NWP in the 1930s and decades to come was declining

47 Pardo, *The National Woman's Party Papers*, 95.

48 Pardo, *The National Woman's Party Papers*, 5, 171-172.

49 Caryn E. Neumann, "The National Woman's Party and the ERA," (Masters Thesis, Florida Atlantic University 1994), 10-11.

membership in the state chapters. Chairmen of the state chapters supported stronger state organizations to rally public opinion in support of the ERA. The chairmen also thought that the national headquarters should send more organizers and speakers to its chapters to help increase state activity. Yet in a major policy shift from the previous decade, the NWP began to gradually reduce its state legislative activities due to lack of funds and out of fear that state legislation supporting equal rights could be rescinded in future sessions.⁵⁰ By 1931, membership dropped below 12,000 and party funds were diminishing. Only 12 of the state chapters remained active, 17 had chairmen but no active organization, 11 existed only on paper, and 6 had no organization but some members. Organization Committee chairman Alma Lutz felt that additional organizational work would stop due to lack of funds and concluded that the NWP would continue to decline unless there was an infusion of new funds into the party. New funding was unlikely given the current status of the NWP and the ongoing effects of the Great Depression.⁵¹

In 1932, editor of *Equal Rights* Edith Houghton Hooker suggested several organizational and policy reforms to Alice Paul and the NWP National Council, which ultimately caused a three-year rift within the party. Hooker believed that the feminist movement, and in turn the NWP, had exhausted its methods and abilities to improve the status of women in the United States and cited the declining membership and dwindling finances as evidence. Hooker pressed for more efficiency and less duplication within the organization. In addition, Hooker did not support the concept of a small “elite” group directing the ERA campaign and thought that with a large, national organization, equal rights issues would be more broadly accepted. By focusing on both local and national equal rights issues, more rank and file members would feel more directly involved in the movement. Hooker felt that by maintaining the narrow approach to the ERA campaign, “the NWP was not only ignoring larger bases of feminist support, but was also prolonging the achievement of its objectives indefinitely.”⁵² At the NWP’s biennial convention in New York City in 1934, tensions were high among the delegates over the party’s growing inner conflict. In a heated discussion, many established members expressed that Hooker’s plan would slow the progress of the congressional campaign for the ERA by concentrating the party’s activities on increasing membership and rejuvenating the state chapters. Although the convention delegates did not formally adopt Hooker’s plan, they agreed that

50 Pardo, *The National Woman’s Party Papers*, 42-43.

51 Pardo, *The National Woman’s Party Papers*, 54.

52 Pardo, *The National Woman’s Party Papers*, 65-66.

membership drives would be an integral part of Alice's Paul ERA strategy and that a formal restructuring of the NWP would occur depending on available funds.⁵³

By 1934, the membership problems faced by the NWP grew even more dire. Overall membership dropped below 5,000 and state chapters continued to collapse, especially in the south and the west. Less than half of NWP members subscribed to *Equal Rights*. In the previous decade, Alice Paul maintained a firm control over all aspects of the NWP. However, in the 1930s Paul spent a considerable amount of time abroad, particularly in Geneva, and those left in charge of the NWP in her absence were not sufficiently in control to effectively handle any issues. Although Paul's total control of all NWP affairs and her unwillingness to allow for decentralized decision making was the root of the problem, NWP officers were also to blame for the mismanagement of party operations. Hooker's criticisms intensified and she condemned party leaders for their failure to manage the organization. Adding to her previous criticisms, Hooker claimed that leadership was not paying bills, had not distributed the National Council meeting minutes, and had not prepared a budget to limit NWP expenditures. Hooker also condemned party leaders for being arrogant, autocratic, elitist, and condescending in their interactions with members.⁵⁴ The conflict also created divisions over the direction of *Equal Rights* and the role and autonomy of the NWP's Government Worker's Council.

As tensions escalated, Hooker and her supporters considered establishing a new equal rights organization. In 1935, from Geneva, Alice Paul demanded that talks between the NWP and Hooker and her supporters be held in an atmosphere of compromise. Eventually, Hooker's group and the rest of the NWP were able to come to an understanding and ease tensions within the party.⁵⁵ The resolution of the conflict did not solve the party's declining membership issues, however, and at the biennial convention in the fall of 1938, the delegates spent considerable time discussing declining membership, which at that time was only 1,933. While efforts were being made to reorganize some state chapters, Organization Committee chairman Cara Snell Wolfe urged all concerned members to volunteer their time to increase NWP membership in their communities.⁵⁶

53 Pardo *The National Woman's Party Papers*, 69-70.

54 Pardo, *The National Woman's Party Papers*, 71.

55 Pardo, *The National Woman's Party Papers*, 77.

56 Pardo, *The National Woman's Party Papers*, 94.

THE NATIONAL WOMAN'S PARTY AFTER WORLD WAR II, 1945-1959

NWP MEMBERSHIP AND INNER TURMOIL

After millions of women joined the workforce in the United States during World War II, the end of the war brought many American women back into roles as housewives and mothers as they made room for returning veterans who needed jobs. Television, films, advertisements, and prevailing societal attitudes encouraged women to believe that the “woman’s place” in society centered on the home and family and that “truly feminine” women had no desire for higher education, careers, or a political voice and could be content through housework, marriage, and child rearing alone. As later expressed by Betty Friedan in *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), “Fulfillment as a woman had only one definition for American women after 1949—the housewife-mother.”⁵⁷

While women’s employment outside the home gradually increased in the 1950s and undermined the traditional belief surrounding the proper division of labor, it did not fully change public attitudes. Many women continued to attack the notion of a women’s place and fight for equal rights. According to historian Leila J. Rupp in “The Women’s Community of the National Woman’s Party,” “Many of these women belonged to the National Woman’s Party. . . within which they formed a community based on shared history, common beliefs, commitment to feminist goals, cooperative feminist activities, and friendship.”⁵⁸

In the years following the end of World War II, the NWP was the only organization in the United States that identified as feminist. Although the negative connotation with the term “feminist” was not new to the postwar era, feminist backlash was prevalent after the war and most women and organizations avoided the label. Feminist activism after World War II was almost nonexistent, yet the NWP continued its efforts to improve the status of women and fight for the passage of the ERA by gaining support from other women’s organizations, lobbying Congress and the president, and seeking publicity.⁵⁹ The NWP’s role in the women’s movement in the late 1940s and 1950s established the roots of the modern feminist movement, or second wave of feminism, of the 1960s and 1970s.

After World War II and through the early 1960s, the NWP had only around 600 to 800 members who paid their annual dues.⁶⁰ By the 1940s, many of the NWP’s most active members had died and few young women replaced them. The small

57 Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1963).

58 Leila J. Rupp, “The Women’s Community in the National Woman’s Party, 1945 to the 1960s,” *Signs* 10 No. 4 (Summer 1985): 715-716.

59 Rupp, “The Women’s Community in the National Woman’s Party,” 716.

60 Rupp, “The Survival of American Feminism,” 43.

membership numbers never bothered Alice Paul as she was once quoted as saying, “We thought the easiest way to get the [ERA] through was to try to get each of the national organizations to come out for it with its membership, not try to build up a duplicate membership of our own.” After 1920, the NWP “evolved from a very small collection of militant suffragists to an even smaller collection of militant feminists.” The NWP’s membership never reached the same numbers as it did during the suffrage years, and without membership drives the NWP’s strength dwindled and its insularity increased.⁶¹

After World War II, the NWP’s membership continued to be homogeneous, primarily composed of well-educated White women from the upper and middle classes, many of whom held professional jobs. Most were not young and were in their 50s, 60s, and 70s. The most active joined the movement in the last years of the suffrage struggle and remained dedicated to the NWP and its quest for equal rights.⁶² It also was not uncommon for members to be unmarried or widowed. Almost all leaders were Protestant, with few Catholic or Jewish members. As Caryn E. Neumann in “The National Woman’s Party and the ERA” surmised, “the NWP can be described as an elitist WASP [White Anglo-Saxon Protestant] organization whose members were atypical of American women as a whole.”⁶³

While the NWP’s primary goal was an amendment for the equal rights of women, it failed to be representative of all women. Lack of diversity may have hindered the party’s effectiveness in the passage of the ERA. Class and racial uniformity among members made the NWP unable to understand and adequately respond to those who opposed the ERA.⁶⁴ The only known Black member of the NWP was Mary Church Terrell, who died in 1954. Racism within the women’s movement as well as within society in general kept the NWP and the movement predominately White.⁶⁵ However, according to Rupp in “The Survival of American Feminism,” some NWP members were “socially and politically conservative, as well as anti-Semitic and racist.” In the 1950s women’s organizations, including the League of Women Voters and the American Association of University Women, struggled with the question of integration within local branches, yet the issue rarely arose for the NWP and “the party steadfastly refused to connect its struggle in any positive way with the burgeoning civil rights movement.” Some members not only applauded Senator Joseph McCarthy’s witch hunt, but also used the Communist Party’s opposition to the ERA to win support from anti-Communist groups and

61 Caryn E. Neumann, “The National Woman’s Party and the ERA,” 10-11.

62 Leila J. Rupp, “The Women’s Community in the National Woman’s Party,” 718-719; Neumann, “The National Woman’s Party and the ERA,” 12.

63 Neumann, “The National Woman’s Party and the ERA,” 12.

64 Neumann, “The National Woman’s Party and the ERA,” 11.

65 Rupp, “The Survival of American Feminism,” 46.

individuals. Although not all members shared the same racist and conservative tendencies, “the party gained a reputation based on the most unsavory attitudes of its members.”⁶⁶

While the NWP lacked racial and class diversity, many members of the NWP lived women-centric lives, forming strong bonds and relationships with other women and living in environments predominately of women. Several NWP members lived in long-term committed relationships with other women, including New York State chapter chairman Dr. Jeannette Marks, professor of English at Mount Holyoke College, who lived with Mary Woolley, former president of Mount Holyoke, from 1941 until Woolley’s death in 1947. Both women were members of the NWP. Alma Lutz, a feminist biographer and author of the column “A Feminist Thinks It Over,” published in *Equal Rights*, shared a Boston apartment and country house with her Vassar College roommate, Marguerite Smith, for over 40 years. Agnes Wells, dean at Indiana University and chairman of the NWP in the 1950s, lived with a woman companion for 28 years. Letters between members illustrate that other women accepted these relationships as primary commitments. In “The Survival of American Feminism,” Leila J. Rupp noted the impact that these women and their relationships had on the NWP’s culture, yet stressed that, “it is important that we recognize both the common bonds and the real differences between women who lived together and loved each other as these women did and women who were part of the lesbian culture of the 1950s.” Rupp concluded that NWP “members saw the centrality of such relationships and affirmed the importance of women’s relationships with other women.”⁶⁷

The women of the NWP held strong relationships that maintained the organization and its sense of community, with the Belmont House as its center of activity. In particular, the “Belmont House created a female world for members of the Woman’s Party when they came to Washington and served as a feminist space for all women who identified with the women’s movement.” A number of women lived at the Belmont House or at the two other NWP-owned houses on 2nd Street NE for periods ranging from several days to months while engaging in lobbying efforts for the ERA. The NWP headquarters continued to serve as a feminist hotel of sorts for women visiting Washington, often women scholars who were in town for research. Bringing women friends and visitors to the Belmont House was also a way to attract new members, and members later recalled that Alice Paul would try to recruit any woman who visited the house, often with success.⁶⁸

66 Rupp, “The Survival of American Feminism,” 44.

67 Rupp, “The Survival of American Feminism,” 54.

68 Rupp, “The Women’s Community in the National Woman’s Party,” 728.

Most importantly, the Belmont House was the NWP's headquarters and center of organizational activities. Its location on Capitol Hill continued to be an asset as the NWP lobbied Congress for the passage of the ERA. After World War II, the biennial national conventions were sporadic and were only held at the Belmont House. The NWP and the national council made major decisions at the house. It also continued to serve as the location for welcoming notable guests, teas to honor women positions or sponsors of the ERA, victory celebrations, and parties such as annual celebrations for Susan B. Anthony's birthday or the anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment.⁶⁹

The "Rump Group"

Wartime restrictions on travel caused the NWP to cancel its conventions in 1943 and 1944. In 1945, the War Committee on Conventions advised the NWP to once again cancel its convention as most rail transportation would be restricted to returning troops. Consequently, the NWP's executive council decided to conduct its elections via mail-in ballot. Alice Paul, weary from her work on the ERA and wishing to spend more time promoting the World Woman's Party, decided to resign from her position as national chairman, a position she took over from Anna Kelton Wiley in 1942.⁷⁰ Filling this position was no easy task, as many women dedicated their lives not so much to the party or its cause, but to Paul and her cause.⁷¹ The unquestionable loyalty to Alice Paul often brought great devotion to the NWP, but in many instances threatened to tear it apart. Women often left the NWP because of their inability to get along with Paul, and some describe being "snubbed" or "dropped" by her. Members made accusations that Paul controlled the NWP in a dictatorial or fascistic manner, causing the party to remain small and elite. In many instances, rejection of Paul's leadership meant rejection of the NWP.⁷²

After Alice Paul's resignation as national chairman, the NWP Nominations Committee nominated Anita Pollitzer, who was likely hand-picked by Paul as her successor. An NWP member since 1918, Anita Pollitzer was one of the women who was arrested with Paul for picketing the White House. Pollitzer held a Master's degree from Columbia University and at the time of her appointment as chairman, taught in New York City. The Nominations Committee only offered one

69 Rupp, "The Women's Community in the National Woman's Party," 729.

70 Paul served as NWP national chairman from 1917 to 1921 and 1942 to 1945. She also served as the chairman of the Congressional Union from 1913 until its merger with the Nation Woman's Party in 1917.

71 Neumann, "The National Woman's Party and the ERA," 22-23.

72 Rupp, "The Survival of American Feminism," 55-56; Rupp, "The Women's Community in the National Woman's Party," 734-735.

candidate per office, following traditional party form. Pollitzer's nomination soon caused the first major schism in the NWP of the post World War II era.⁷³

The majority of NWP members came from the East Coast. New York State in particular, led by Dr. Jeannette Marks, had one of the largest membership rolls. Marks blamed Pollitzer for a failed merger of the New York City and New York State chapters and personally disliked Pollitzer. The New York Chapter gained the support of the Massachusetts and Maryland chapters, which agreed with its complaints about the authoritarian manner of the national chapter, specifically the dictatorial methods of Alice Paul. Consequently, Marks attempted to halt the nomination, claiming that Pollitzer lacked the qualifications for office despite her experience as National Vice Chairman, National Secretary, National Congressional Secretary, and head of the New York City chapter. Failing in the takeover, Marks and nine other members formed a "Coalition Council" to choose another group of candidates. The dispute lasted from September to December and took up valuable time that could have been used for the ERA. Meanwhile, NWP voters elected the official candidates into office.⁷⁴

In the 1940s, the NWP's expectations surrounding the passage of the ERA grew, particularly after the end of World War II when the nation could once again focus its attention on domestic matters. When its passage did not occur, frustrations mounted and NWP members began to debate alternate strategies. One, proposed by Elizabeth M. Hine, was a simple name change for the amendment, "If it is so firmly established with a negative value that we cannot get it passed in 25 years, it is time to try something else. . ." Hines suggested the name "Constitutional Equality," in place of the ERA. Other members took more drastic steps. Those still angered by Pollitzer's election in 1945 formed the "Constitutional Group," known to its enemies as the "Rump Group," that called for the overthrow of national leadership.⁷⁵

While Paul inspired and led the NWP with extreme focus, she often lost sight of the people within the organization and failed to realize the importance of communication. As the members of the Constitutional Group later stated, "Many of our present difficulties have arisen from the few not acquainting the many with what takes place and why." Members were asking why the ERA had not passed, what NWP funds were being used for, and why there were no new faces on the National Council, but were getting few to no answers in return.⁷⁶

73 Neumann, "The National Woman's Party and the ERA," 22-23.

74 Neumann, "The National Woman's Party and the ERA," 23-24.

75 Neumann, "The National Woman's Party and the ERA," 25-27.

76 Neumann, "The National Woman's Party and the ERA," 26-27.



Figure 3-12. Installation ceremony of new officers at the Belmont House, May 3, 1949. Left to right: Anita Pollitzer, retiring National Chairman; First Lady Bess Truman; Dr. Agnes E. Wells, National Chairman; Emma Guffey Miller, First Vice Chairman (*Equal Rights*, April-May-June 1949).

In June 1946, at a meeting of the Eastern Regional Conference, audience members heckled Anita Pollitzer. Doris Stevens, once one of Alice Paul's closest friends, spoke out and called for examination of the NWP's administrative, political, financial, and organizational methods. Others agreed and called for a convention to hash out the issues. Perceiving these actions as an attack on the current administration, Alice Paul and Anita Pollitzer walked out of the conference. A "Rump Convention," held in January 1947 without Paul or Pollitzer and other members who were loyal to them, elected a new slate of officers. The dispute escalated when members of the Rump Group tried to gain access to the Belmont House, but were denied. When a scuffle broke out between some of the women, Alice Paul called the police. Both sides eventually filed lawsuits. Although Paul and Pollitzer prevailed in 1948, the NWP lost some of its most energetic members, including Doris Stevens.⁷⁷

After three years of internal turmoil, the NWP held its biennial convention in Washington in April of 1949, the first convention since 1945. NWP delegates made major changes to the articles of its constitution regarding officers and their duties in response to the issues that occurred with the Rump Group. In addition, the delegates rejected a proposal to allow men to be NWP members. Although delegates nominated both Paul and Pollitzer for national chairmanship, both declined. Delegates proceeded to elect Dr. Agnes E. Wells as National Chairman and Emma Guffey Miller as 1st Vice Chairman (Figure 3-12). One of the convention's highlights occurred when US Attorney General Tom Clark spoke at the convention banquet in support of the ERA during his address to the delegates. The convention concluded with the adoption of various resolutions including a call for the immediate passage of the ERA in Congress and a protest against the Labor Department's Women's Bureau as a propaganda office opposing the ERA.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Neumann, "The National Woman's Party and the ERA," 27-28.

⁷⁸ Pardo, *The National Woman's Party Papers*, 153-154.



Figure 3-13. “Dr. Agnes E. Wells hands the gavel to the new national chairman, Mrs. Ethel Ernest Murrell” (*Equal Rights*, May-June 1951).

Continued Internal Conflict

As the National Woman’s Party entered its third decade since the passage of the 19th Amendment, it continued to serve as the leading women’s organization advocating for equal rights for women. Yet the party’s funds and overall membership were in decline. In 1951, Ethel Ernest Murrell succeeded Agnes Wells as national chairman (Figure 3-13). By the time Murrell took office, “the NWP was bankrupt, in debt, had buildings that were falling into pieces, and a paid membership of about 600.” The NWP hoped that Murrell would bring in some much-needed new ideas and leadership to the organization.⁷⁹

A lawyer from Miami, Florida, Murrell initially became involved in the women’s movement to empower married women and eventually expanded her work to support the ERA. As chairman, Murrell’s focus was on what she perceived as the reality of a typical American woman’s life, namely marriage and children. While well intentioned, this ignored the concerns of many powerful NWP members who were single, past child-rearing age, or in woman-committed relationships. Under Murrell’s leadership, the “ERA became a minor part of a program that stressed the dignity of marriage, demanded patriotic teaching in schools, sought equal pay, and attempted to secure parental rights for women.”⁸⁰

With membership and funds dwindling, Murrell hoped to revitalize the membership roster by changing the party’s goals and broadening its appeal. In October 1951, the NWP National Council adopted a resolution that established

⁷⁹ Neumann, “The National Woman’s Party and the ERA,” 47.

⁸⁰ Neumann, “The National Woman’s Party and the ERA,” 47.

a Ways and Means Committee, lead by Mary G. Roebing, to raise funds for the purpose of eliminating NWP debts and continuing the ERA campaign. With broader plans for the committee than simply raising funds, Murrell and Roebing hired a special consultant to raise \$250,000 a year for NWP activities. In 1952, Murrell also signed a management contract with a public relations firm to create new objectives and a new publication for the NWP. At the end of the year, Murrell distributed the new objectives to NWP members. In addition to continuing the campaign for women's rights, the new objectives called for the NWP to advocate for a variety of "good government" ideas, such as requiring integrity and decency in government, maintaining a firm foreign policy, adhering to the American governmental plan of checks and balances, working for a balanced budget, and opposing collectivism in government. The objectives also called for the party to advocate for education plans, including a full literacy program, maintenance of a free press, dissemination of information, direction of education along patriotic lines, recognition of the power of God in personal living, and the espousal of reform and progress in education. Murrell's plans included the replacement of *Equal Rights* with a new publication entitled *Woman's Horizon*.⁸¹

While many National Council members, including Alice Paul, agreed with Murrell that additional funds were needed in order for the NWP to survive as an influential organization, they did not agree with the broadening of the party's objectives. They also objected to Murrell's signing of the management agreements without first consulting the council. In addition, Murrell applied for tax-exempt status, which would require the NWP to become a non-political organization, and ordered a halt on all lobbying activities of the ERA. Since lobbying for the ERA was the NWP's only goal for the last 28 years, many members refused to quit and revolted against Murrell. After debating the issues through the winter and spring of 1953, the council instructed Murrell to draft a mutual general release that would nullify the contracts with the consultant and public relations firm and relieve the contracting parties of any obligations. Murrell reluctantly complied, yet she resented Alice Paul and the council for opposing her plans.⁸²

Murrell formally resigned as national chairman in June 1953 at the party's biennial convention, held at the Belmont House. At the convention, Murrell stated, "the past must give way to the present," and urged an overhauling of the party's program. Murrell stressed that "Methods used in 1913 are no longer effective," and that states had already adopted equality legislation more radical than the ERA. "The fact that there is so much opposition to this amendment, which is

81 Pardo, *The National Woman's Party Papers*, 155.

82 Pardo, *The National Woman's Party Papers*, 155-156; Neumann, "The National Woman's Party and the ERA," 47-48.



Figure 3-14. Group of NWP speakers before a hearing of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on the ERA, March 10, 1946 (Pennsylvania Historical Society).

now only a guarantee of rights already won, indicates that the amendment is not being presented in the proper way.” Murrell also stressed the need to bring in new, younger women as members, members from all walks of life including married and working women. Murrell asserted, “Thus the American woman herself may be brought to realize that the amendment is something she wants and needs.” Member Ernestine Hale Bellamy, chairman of the junior council reported that her two-year efforts to bring young women to the NWP was met with “discouraging results” and “blamed the dearth of interest on the fact that ‘no concrete means of action was afforded [to] them.’”⁸³ Shortly after leaving the NWP, Murrell and several of her supporters started the American Woman’s Council to advocate for many of the objectives outlined under Murrell’s time as NWP chairman.⁸⁴

THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT AFTER WORLD WAR II

In 1946, the Senate held its first floor vote on the Equal Rights Amendment. Although the vote was 38 to 35 in favor, it still fell short of the two-thirds majority needed to pass as a constitutional amendment. Throughout the late 1940s and 1950s, the amendment was introduced in every session of Congress. In contrast to the 1930s and 1940s, when the amendment seemed to be perpetually mired in Judiciary subcommittees, in the 1950s it generally passed quickly through the

⁸³ Ruth Dean, “Party Urged to Recruit Members,” *Evening Star*, 13 June 1953:40.

⁸⁴ The American Women’s Council failed to attract sufficient membership and disbanded in the mid-1950s. Pardo, *The National Woman’s Party Papers*, 155-156; Neumann, “The National Woman’s Party and the ERA,” 47-48.



Figure 3-15. Meeting of the NWP Women's Joint Legislative Committee for Equal Rights in the library of the Belmont House, 26 September 1954 (*Equal Rights*, October 1954).

House and Senate Judiciary Committees to the floors of both houses. On some occasions, a committee chair opposed to the amendment would cause it to stall. Attempts to alter or water down the amendment's language were unfailingly opposed by the National Woman's Party, but still delayed the progress of the bill. The amendment was, however, consistently included in the platforms of both parties at their presidential conventions as well as by some state legislatures. The NWP also continued to secure endorsements from local, state, and national women's organizations, while working against strong opposition from labor organizations. The goal of two-thirds majorities in each house necessary to move the amendment to the ratification stage remained elusive during this period.

A NEW ERA: DECLINING NUMBERS, NEW WOMEN'S/ FEMINISTS ORGANIZATIONS AND FOCUS ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS, 1960-1977

In the 1960s and 1970s, the NWP was less influential in formulating policy and in directing the lobbying campaign for equal rights as it was in the decades prior. New national feminist groups such as Women's Equality Action League, the National Organization for Women, and the National Women's Political Caucus attracted new and young members and advocated for a variety of political objectives beyond equal rights, including family planning and birth control, abortion, equal employment opportunities, and the demand for alternative roles for women. The NWP not only struggled to attract new members, but also lacked funds for an extensive lobbying campaign and depended on wealthy members and bequests from deceased members to maintain its efforts toward the passage of the ERA and the maintenance of its headquarters. In the 1960s, the NWP's

membership dwindled to only a few hundred. By the 1970s, the organization's national leadership stopped counting. The "Belmont House had become a home for old women with problems. . .with women reminiscing about the past and reflecting on the Suffragists who had spellbound the crowds."⁸⁵

Setting the stage for the emergence of liberal feminism in the mid-to-late 1960s was the President's Commission on the Status of Women, established in December 1961 by President John F. Kennedy, to investigate the legal, social, economic, and politic status of women and offer recommendations to the President on how women could become equal partners with men in American society. President Kennedy's Assistant Secretary of Labor and Director of the Women's Bureau, Esther Peterson, was the primary force behind the establishment of the commission and persuaded Kennedy to appoint Eleanor Roosevelt as the commission's chair. Peterson served as vice chair and led the commission after the death of Roosevelt in 1962. Women in both the Democratic Party and the labor movement were pressing Kennedy to take action on women's issues. Peterson, an advocate for women and labor since 1929, was equally frustrated by the government's inactivity on women's issues. While Peterson saw the commission as a way to press for important reforms, such as equal pay and non-discrimination policies, she was also an opponent of the ERA and believed the Congress would delay its consideration of the ERA while the commission was conducting its inquiries.⁸⁶

NWP members Nina Horton Avery and Anita Pollitzer, along with other organizations, testified at hearings in front of the commission in support of the ERA. The commission used this testimony, along with research and other information, to develop its final report, presented on October 11, 1963. The report did not support the ERA on the grounds that it was not needed at that particular time since the Constitution already provided for the equality of men and women under the 5th and 14th Amendments.⁸⁷ Yet the commission's report proved that discrimination against women was a serious problem and recommended an end to sex discrimination in hiring, paid maternity leave, and universal child care.

85 Rupp, "The Women's Community in the National Woman's Party," 728; Nuemann, "The National Woman's Party and the ERA," 69; Pardo, *The National Woman's Party Papers*, 163.

86 Elizabeth Singer More, "Report of the President's Commission on the Status of Women: Background Content, Significance" accessed 28 May 2020 at https://www.radcliffe.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/documents/report_of_the_presidents_commission_on_the_status_of_women_background_content_significance.pdf.

87 President's Commission on the Status of Women, *American Women* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office 1963), 44-45; Pardo, 164-165.

The commission's report also recommended that each state form similar commissions and by 1967 all 50 states had commissions in operation.⁸⁸

The NWP was infuriated by the commission's recommendation on the ERA and annoyed by the formation of the state commissions. Of the commission's findings on the ERA, Alice Paul stated, "We are against the proposal of the Commission which would force women to wait for some far off day when the Supreme Court may possibly reinterpret the Constitution to give equal rights to women." Referring to the state commissions, NWP member Ernestine Breisch Powell complained:

Most of them will do a great deal of hard work and come up with statistics we have had on file in our library for years. Our feeling is that they are a waste of time and energy. What they are doing merely draws away from the main issue - equal rights for women.⁸⁹

In 1963, the same year the commission released its report, feminist author Betty Friedan published her ground-breaking book *The Feminine Mystique*, which criticized the notion that women could only find fulfillment through childrearing and homemaking. According to her *New York Times* obituary in 2006, Friedan's book "Ignited the contemporary women's movement in 1963 and as a result permanently transformed the social fabric of the United States and countries around the world" and "is widely regarded as one of the most influential nonfiction books of the twentieth century."⁹⁰

American women, recognizing the need for change, were greatly influenced by the civil rights movement and inspired by the model of Black Americans who joined together to protest long-standing discrimination and racism. Named by historians as "the second wave" of feminism, the revitalized feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s attracted women of different generations with various political backgrounds and protest methods. Many organizations fought together to challenge laws that discriminated on the basis of sex and pressed major political parties to respond to their demands.⁹¹ As Rep. Shirley Chisholm of New York, the first Black Congresswoman, stated at a 1970 Congressional hearing in support of the ERA:

88 Kimberly Wilmot Voss, "Women Didn't Just March," 28 March 2016, accessed at <http://werehistory.org/womens-commissions/>.

89 Neumann, "The National Woman's Party and the ERA," 64-65.

90 "Obituary: Betty Friedan, Feminist Crusader," *New York Times*, 5 February 2006.

91 "Women's Movements Through Photographs: The Intersection of Civil Rights and Women's Liberation," *Britannica*, 6 June 2020 at <https://britannicalearn.com/blog/part-3-womens-movements/>.



Figure 3-16. Women's liberation march from Farragut Square to Lafayette Square, August 26, 1970 (Library of Congress).

The argument that this amendment will not solve the problem of sex discrimination is not relevant. If the argument were used against a civil rights bill, as it has been used in the past, the prejudice that lies behind it would be embarrassing. Of course laws will not eliminate prejudice from the hearts of human beings. But that is no reason to allow prejudice to continue to be enshrined in our laws—to perpetuate injustice through inaction.⁹²

TITLE VII OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964

The National Woman's Party followed the civil rights movement in the early 1960s, but with mixed feelings. After Mary Church Terrell's death in 1954, the NWP had no Black members. Since no Black women joined or sought to join the NWP, the organization did not feel obligated to form a policy on civil rights. On the topic of civil rights, NWP members were conflicted. Some members supported the moderate actions of the NAACP and saw a clear link between civil rights for people of color and equal rights for women. Others held on to racism and feared "infiltration" by civil rights agitators. There were also members who were frustrated that Black women's organizations, including the National Council of Negro Women, did not support the ERA.⁹³

With the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Alice Paul and the NWP saw an opportunity to include women's rights. The NWP began efforts to include sex provisions in

92 Shirley Anita St. Hill Chisholm, "For the Equal Rights Amendment," (10 AUGUST 1970, Voice of Democracy, accessed 11 June 2020 at <https://voicesofdemocracy.umd.edu/chisholm-for-the-equal-rights-amendment-speech-text/>).

93 Neumann, "The National Woman's Party and the ERA," 65.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act in July 1963, after the bill was introduced in the House. On July 9, 1963, President Kennedy held a special meeting with 250-300 representatives from women's organizations to discuss the merits of the civil rights act. Although Kennedy discussed each provision of the bill in detail, he did not explain why it did not include any protection against sex discrimination. Nina Horton Avery, representing the NWP, pointed out this exclusion to Kennedy and later to Lee C. White, Special Assistant Council to the President. Both seemed responsive to the proposal; however, the White House did not act on the omission.⁹⁴

Alice Paul and NWP member and lawyer Caruthers Berger began meeting with congressmen to gain support on the sex provision in the civil rights bill. The NWP wanted the word "sex" included in all the titles of the bill, but especially in Title VII that prohibited discrimination in employment. Paul and the NWP found support from Rep. Howard W. Smith of Virginia, a powerful Democrat and opponent of civil rights. Although a long time supporter of the NWP and the ERA, Smith likely introduced the amendment to the bill as a way to kill the measure. Smith introduced the sex amendments during the debate on the civil rights bill on February 8, 1964. Two days later the House voted on the sex amendments and defeated every amendment except for the sex provisions in Title VII. The civil rights bill then went to the Senate and Paul and Berger formed an emergency committee to help maintain the Title VII provision in the Senate version of the bill. The Senate eventually passed the Title VII provisions as part of the civil rights bill and President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act on July 2, 1964.⁹⁵ Barring employment discrimination on the basis of race, national origin, color, religion, and sex, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act opened up significant opportunities for women and others and was a signature achievement of the NWP.

After the passage of the Civil Rights Act, the federal government began work on policies to enforce the new laws and issued Executive Order 11246 in September 1965 to address compliance with civil rights regulations. The executive order failed to mention discrimination based on sex. In addition, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), established under Title VII, initially did not enforce sex discrimination in employment. This government inaction sparked the protest of women and advocacy groups.⁹⁶ At the Third National Conference of Commissions on the Status of Women in 1966, feminist author and activist Betty

94 Pardo, *The National Woman's Party Papers*, 169.

95 Pardo, *The National Woman's Party Papers*, 169.

96 Allen Fisher, "Women's Rights and the Civil Rights Act of 1964," National Archives, accessed 2 June 2020 at <https://www.archives.gov/women/1964-civil-rights-act>.

Friedan established the National Organization of Women (NOW). Frustrated by the failure of the EEOC to enforce Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Friedan and others recognized the need for an organization to speak on behalf of women the way civil rights groups had done for Black Americans.⁹⁷ NOW also invited other women's organizations to join its efforts. Friedan wrote to Alice Paul in February 1967 asking Paul to "give some thought to the various ways in which NOW and your organization might be helpful to each other." Paul joined NOW and helped persuade the group to endorse the ERA.⁹⁸ The relationship between NOW and the NWP eventually soured when NOW failed to give the NWP due credit for keeping the ERA alive.⁹⁹

In 1967, NOW pledged its support of the ERA. As the new organization worked toward establishing itself as a national organization, female antiwar, civil rights, and leftist activists formed more radical women's groups.¹⁰⁰ The divide between these new organizations and the singular focus of the NWP widened. One event that clearly illustrates the gap between the radical feminists of the 1960s and those who preceded them occurred in 1969 between Barbara Mehrhof, who was part of a women's liberation group, and Alice Paul. As part of the leftist counter-inaugural demonstrations surrounding Richard Nixon's inauguration in January 1969, Mehrhof's group organized a feminist action with the purpose to declare that suffragism was dead and a new movement for genuine liberation was underway. When Mehrhof's group asked Paul to join them on stage in burning their voter registration cards, Paul reportedly "hit the ceiling." Understandably, Paul, who was jailed and force fed for the suffrage cause, was not interested in dismissing the importance of suffrage. As explained by author Alice Echols in *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975*, "To Paul, woman suffrage constituted a significant breakthrough in women's struggle for equality. But to women's liberationists who had acquired their political education in the civil rights movement and the New Left, voting was a 'mockery of democracy,' and equality in a fundamentally unequal society an obscenity."¹⁰¹

THE REBIRTH OF THE ERA

Although many organizations supported the ERA in the 1960s, movement of the amendment in Congress was slow and unproductive. The ERA did not move out of the House Judiciary Committee from the second session of the 86th Congress

97 National Organization of Women, "Founding," accessed 1 June 2020 at <https://now.org/about/history/founding-2/>.

98 Neumann, "The National Woman's Party and the ERA," 68.

99 Neumann, "The National Woman's Party and the ERA," 68.

100 Elinor Burkett, "Women's Rights Movement," Encyclopedia Britannica, accessed 9 June 2020 at <https://www.britannica.com/event/womens-movement>.

101 Alice Echols, *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 12.

in 1960 to the end of the 90th Congress in 1968, thanks to Rep. Emanuel Celler of New York, chairman of the committee, who opposed the amendment. Although the ERA had the support of three congresswomen during this time, Katherine St. George of New York, Catherine May of Washington, and Martha Griffiths of Michigan, who were able to secure many co-sponsors of the amendment, Celler's control of the Judiciary Committee prevented the House from considering the ERA. The amendment had more support in the Senate with Senators Gale W. McGee of Wyoming and Eugene J. McCarthy of Minnesota as the principal sponsors. However, the ERA failed to get enough votes and it remained in the Judiciary Committee with no action.¹⁰²

The renewed interest in the ERA brought by new women's organizations revitalized the equal rights movement and by 1970, the amendment had gained tremendous mainstream support. Presidents Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, and Jimmy Carter all supported the ERA and First Ladies Betty Ford and Rosalynn Carter lobbied for it (Figure 3-17). Popular women's magazines, including *Redbook*, *Good Housekeeping*, and *Cosmopolitan* all published positive articles on the ERA. Celebrities including Patty Duke, Ann Landers, Erma Bombeck, Marlo Thomas, and Carol Burnett all spoke out in support of the ERA.¹⁰³

102 Pardo, *The National Woman's Party Papers*, 167-168.

103 Elizabeth Kolbert, "Phyllis Schlafly and the Conservative Revolution," *The New Yorker*, 31 October 2005.



Figure 3-17. First Lady Betty Ford expressing her support for the Equal Rights Amendment (National Archives).

In February 1970, 20 NOW leaders disrupted the hearings of the US Senate Subcommittee on Constitutional Amendments, demanding the ERA be heard by the full Congress.¹⁰⁴ In order to bypass Celler, Rep. Griffiths introduced a discharge petition in June 1970 to allow the House to consider the ERA without judiciary approval. On August 10, 1970, the House passed the ERA without any riders by a vote of 350 to 15. The amendment adopted by the House did not include a time limit on the ratification process. The Senate debated the ERA, but could not agree on the wording, and did not vote on the amendment before the end of the session.¹⁰⁵

Griffiths reintroduced the ERA in the House in 1971 and on October 12, 1971, the House approved the amendment 354 to 24. Finally, on March 22, 1972, the Senate approved the ERA by a vote of 84 to 8. Congress sent the ERA to the states for ratification. However, Sen. Sam Ervin and Rep. Emanuel Celler, both opponents of the ERA, succeeded in setting an arbitrary time limit of seven years for ratification.¹⁰⁶

At the same time Congress was debating the ERA, the NWP elected Elizabeth Chittick as its chairman in 1971 (Figure 3-18). Chittick served as chairman until 1975, when she took over as NWP president, a role she retained until 1989. At the time she was elected as chairman in 1971, Chittick was only a five-year member of the NWP.¹⁰⁷ Born in Bangor, Pennsylvania, as Elizabeth Lancaster, Chittick attended business school in Easton, Pennsylvania. She took a civilian job with the United States Navy at the Naval Air Station in Lakehurst, New Jersey, and later at the Banana River National Air Station in Florida. Following the end of World War II, Chittick left the Navy to attend Columbia University in New York. She married William Chittick, an electrical engineer, and eventually moved to the Philippines. After returning to the United States, Chittick studied to become a stockbroker and joined the firm Bache & Co. at a time when few women were working in the field. Chittick went back to school a few years later and eventually worked for the Internal Revenue Service in Washington, DC, as one of the agency's few female revenue officers. While in Washington, a friend introduced Chittick to Alice Paul. According to Chittick, the two instantly became friends and "Before I knew it, I'm a member of the National Woman's Party." Chittick later stated that she moved

104 National Organization of Women, "Chronology of the Equal Rights Amendment, 1923-1996," accessed 9 June 2020 at <https://now.org/resource/chronology-of-the-equal-rights-amendment-1923-1996/>.

105 Pardo, *The National Woman's Party Papers*, 167-168.

106 National Organization of Women, "Chronology of the Equal Rights Amendment, 1923-1996," accessed 9 June 2020 at <https://now.org/resource/chronology-of-the-equal-rights-amendment-1923-1996/>.

107 Caryn E. Nuemann, "The National Woman's Party and the Equal Rights Amendment," 72.



Figure 3-18. Elizabeth Chittick at the Belmont House, date unknown (National Woman's Party).

to Washington at Paul's invitation.¹⁰⁸ Chittick's true relationship with Alice Paul is uncertain. In a 1972 interview, Paul gave the impression that she did not know Chittick very well. Paul stated, "I don't know what to make of Mrs. Chittick, really I don't know what to make of her" and "I don't know the new chairman at all, Mrs. Chittick, I don't know anything much about her, and what she is like or anything."¹⁰⁹

As the battle for the ERA moved to the states for ratification, the NWP's strategy of recruiting the support of national organizations was no longer effective. In past efforts, NWP members lobbied legislators in their own states, writing letters and sometimes making personal calls, which saved money and was most efficient. With little past experience with the NWP, Chittick lacked knowledge of the party's history and did not grasp the impact of these local efforts. Although the NWP formed the Equal Rights Ratification Council (ERRC) along with NOW, the League of Women Voters, and other women's organizations, the NWP lacked the funds to finance its efforts. Chittick refused to accept the diminished scope of the NWP and joined representatives from the ERRC and agreed to go state to

108 "Trailblazer in the Workplace Also Fought for Women's Rights," *The Palm Beach Post*, 27 December 2006:5.

109 Amelia Fry, *Conversations with Alice Paul: Woman Suffrage and the Equal Rights Amendment* (Berkeley: University of California, 1976), 147, 277.



Figure 3-19. Demonstrators opposed to the ERA in front of the White House February 4, 1977 (Library of Congress).



Figure 3-20. Phyllis Schlafly in front of the White House February 4, 1977 (Library of Congress).

state to set up similar organizations to support the ratification of the ERA. Chittick traveled to North Carolina and Nevada as part of this effort.¹¹⁰

As the NWP and others continued to work toward ratification ahead of the March 1979 deadline, on August 16, 1973, Congress passed a resolution, first introduced by Rep. Bella Abzug (New York) in 1971, that designated August 26 as Women's Equality Day. Equality Day commemorated the day in 1920 when Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby signed the proclamation granting American women the constitutional right to vote. The same day, President Richard Nixon issued a proclamation which stated, in part:

The struggle for women's suffrage, however, was only the first step toward full and equal participation of women in our Nation's life. In recent years, we have made other giant strides by attacking sex discrimination through our laws and by paving new avenues to equal economic opportunity for women. Today, in virtually every sector of our society, women are making important contributions to the quality of American life. And yet, much still remains to be done.¹¹¹

By the spring of 1973, the ERA had won 30 of the needed 38 state ratifications. The previous fall, Phyllis Schlafly, a conservative lawyer and author, launched her campaign STOP ERA, an acronym that stood for "Stop Taking Our Privileges" (Figure 3-19 and Figure 3-20). Schlafly later said, "I knew from the start that I had found enough seriously wrong with E.R.A. to stop it, or at least stall it, for an awfully long time." In January 1973, the Supreme Court handed down its *Roe v. Wade* decision and the ERA soon became entangled in the fight over abortion rights. Progress on ratification of the ERA stalled.¹¹²

Black women in particular stood to gain the most from the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. Anti-ERA groups, including STOP ERA, tried to discourage Black participation in the fight for the ERA by saying that it was a "white, elitist movement" with no benefits for Black women. This was far from the truth. As explained by Cathy Sedwick and Reba Williams in "Black Women and the Equal Rights Amendment," published in 1976:

Two hundred years after the American revolution and ten years after the Civil Rights movement, 53% of the black population suffers discrimination because of sex. Black women suffer cruelly in this society from living in a country which is both sexist and racist. We are triply oppressed as workers, as blacks, and as women. We are the most exploited workers. Many of us are forced to work the most menial, low-paying, dead-end jobs. We are often denied opportunities to

¹¹⁰ Nuemann, "The National Woman's Party and the Equal Rights Amendment," 74.

¹¹¹ Proclamation 4236, August 26, 1973, "Women's Equality Day," accessed 27 May 2020 at <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-87/pdf/STATUTE-87-Pg1238.pdf>.

¹¹² Elizabeth Kolbert, "Phyllis Schlafly and the Conservative Revolution," *The New Yorker*, 31 October 2005.

compete for better jobs because many times these jobs are exclusively reserved for men, or for whites. As the layoffs due to financial cutbacks come down, we are often the first to be fired. Even when we work at many of the same jobs as men, we cannot always expect equal pay for the work that we do.¹¹³

Ratification of the ERA would make job discrimination laws, which affected Black women most severely, unconstitutional. Recognizing its importance, many Black organizations endorsed the ERA by the 1970s, including the NAACP, National Council of Negro Women, Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's clubs, and the National Black Feminist Organization. Sedwick and Williams argued that the ratification of the ERA would put Black women in a better position to fight other issues, including police brutality and equal rights for Black students. They urged Black Americans to fight for the ratification of the ERA, similar to the efforts of the civil rights movement:

We need to organize an aggressive, visible campaign to show that the majority supports the ERA and put pressure on the Democratic and Republican politicians who have kept this amendment from becoming law. Black women can play a leading role in building such a movement. It is in the interest of all black people to join the struggle for the ratification of the ERA, as a way to advance the conditions of black women.¹¹⁴

A 1976 poll indicated that 60% of Black women supported the ERA, and 63% of Black men supported it.¹¹⁵

After the Senate passed the ERA on March 22, 1972, Alice Paul retired from the National Woman's Party and left Washington. She never returned to the NWP headquarters. Paul continued to lobby for ratification of the amendment state by state from her telephone at her lakeside cottage in Ridgefield, Connecticut. In the decade before her retirement, Paul reluctantly agreed to an interview with Amelia R. Fry, an oral historian who interviewed surviving suffragists for a project that later became known as the "Suffragists Oral History Project." Fry later wrote after interviewing Paul in November 1972 and March 1973, that Paul left Washington for Connecticut "because there were some drastic changes taking place at the Alva Belmont House." According to another source, Paul left after a dispute with President Elizabeth Chittick. Fry also predicted, "The abrupt change in leadership in the National Woman's Party which occurred at that time is a fertile subject for theses of the future."¹¹⁶

113 Cathy Sedwick and Reba Williams, "Black Women and the Equal Rights Amendment," *The Black Scholar*, 7, No. 10, BLACK BICENTENNIAL (July-August 1976), 24.

114 Sedwick and Williams, "Black Women and the Equal Rights Amendment," 24-29.

115 Sedwick and Williams, "Black Women and the Equal Rights Amendment," 24-29.

116 Amelia R. Fry, *Conversations with Alice Paul: Woman Suffrage and the Equal Rights*

Alice Paul continued to organize supporters of the ERA until March 1974, when she suffered a mild stroke and was eventually transferred to a nursing home in Ridgefield. Fry was able to visit Paul in November 1974, and later reported that Paul “was eager to know how the ERA campaign was progressing and anxious to get to Washington so she could properly organize her papers for deposit in an archive.” Two years later, Alice Paul moved to the Quaker Greenleaf Extension Home in Moorestown, New Jersey, not far from her childhood home. She died there on July 9, 1977 at the age of 92.¹¹⁷

On July 20, 1977, more than 500 people attended a memorial service for Alice Paul held at the Washington Cathedral. Suffragist Hazel Hunkins Hallinan, who was 87 years old and traveled from London, and NWP President Elizabeth Chittick spoke in memory of Paul. The first all-female color guard, members of the 1st Women's Army Corps Battalion, US Army Reserve, Fort Belvoir, Virginia, carried flags at the service. NWP suffrage flags, on loan from the Smithsonian Institution, hung on display near the altar. The May 1978 issue of *Equal Rights* reported, “This was a stirring and moving tribute to the passing of our great leader. . . The passing of [the] ERA only inspires us to dedicate our lives to finish what she started back in 1923.”¹¹⁸

On August 26, 1977, after Paul's death, approximately 5,000 people marched along Pennsylvania Avenue from 6th Street NW to Lafayette Square in memory of Alice Paul and to mark the 57th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment (Figure 3-21). NWP President Elizabeth Chittick chose to honor the party's tireless leader at the annual Suffrage Day celebration and asked NOW, League of Women Voters, and other women's organizations to join the NWP in the march. The NWP also invited several suffragists who played a role in the passage of the 19th Amendment to participate, including Hazel Hunkins Hallinan. Honoring the 1913 suffrage parade, the NWP asked all participants to wear white. Many participants wore sashes of purple, white, and gold, the colors of the NWP.¹¹⁹

The morning of the march, leaders of 70 participating women's organizations met with President Jimmy Carter in the Rose Garden, where Carter signed a proclamation that designated August 26 as Women's Equality Day. After the parade, NWP President Elizabeth Chittick held a rally in Lafayette Square where

Amendment, iv, vii; Susan Ware, ed., *Forgotten Heros, Inspiring American Portraits From Our Leading Historians* (New York: The Free Press, 1998), 229.

117 Dena Kleiman, Alice Paul, a Leader for Suffrage and Women's Rights, Dies at 92,” *New York Times*, 10 July 1977.

118 “Memorial Service for Dr. Alice Paul,” *Equal Rights*, 1 no. 1 (May 1978): 3

119 “August 26, March Honoring Alice Paul, *Equal Rights*, 1 no. 1 (May 1978): 3; Jo Freeman, “The Alice Paul Memorial March, Washington, DC, 1977,” accessed 3 March 2020 at <https://www.jofreeman.com/photos/AlicePaul1977.html>.



Figure 3-21. 1977 parade honoring Alice Paul, Elizabeth Chittick fourth from left (Smithsonian Institution).

several women leaders spoke about their efforts for the ERA. The NWP later reported that “Press and TV coverage were very positive and the parade received great publicity. It was a grand day for [the] ERA nationwide and the marchers left with a renewed sense of solidarity and dedication to the cause of ratification of the ERA.”¹²⁰

The following year, on July 9, 1978, over 100,000 people, wearing the purple, white, and gold colors of the NWP and the suffrage movement, marched in Washington, DC, to call for an extension to the deadline for ratification of the ERA. The day marked the largest march for women’s rights in the nation’s history. Over 325 delegations, representing a wide coalition of organizations, participated in the march and displayed their names on purple, white, and gold banners. The first banner in the parade paid tribute to Alice Paul and read “Alice Paul, 1885-1977.” Following the banner was a trolley car carrying veterans of the suffrage movement. The march ended at the west steps of the Capitol where the large crowd heard 35 nationally known speakers express why the ERA was needed and how the battle could be won. Eleanor Smeal, president of the National Organization for Women, sponsor of the rally, stated:

We are here because our hearts are here, our souls are here and our spirits long for liberty and justice. And we will not – we will not ever – accept a country in which we remain second-class citizens ! The E.R.A. – liberty for women – is not

120 “August 26, March Honoring Alice Paul, *Equal Rights*, 1 no. 1 (May 1978): 3; Jo Freeman, “The Alice Paul Memorial March, Washington, DC, 1977,” accessed 3 March 2020 at <https://www.jofreeman.com/photos/AlicePaul1977.html>.

an idea. It is not just a hope. It is a spirit that lives in each one of us, and it can't go away. We can't go home to the 19th Century because we are going to march into the 21st ! So we will march, we will demonstrate, we will petition, we will write letters, we will work this summer like we have never worked before, and we will march into history. We will finish and complete the American dream. We will make real the promise of equality for all.¹²¹

In October 1978, Congress extended the original March 22, 1979, deadline to June 30, 1982. By the deadline, no additional states had ratified the ERA. Two weeks later, the amendment was reintroduced in Congress. A November 1983 floor vote in the House of Representatives failed by only six votes.¹²²

THREATS TO THE BELMONT HOUSE AND LANDMARK STATUS

The Belmont House was the NWP's largest and most valuable asset, yet it was difficult and expensive to maintain. By the 1960s, the house had fallen into disrepair. A later account stated that in the 1960s "the NWP had \$75 total assets in a checking account and, I believe, about \$900 in bills due. There were several people. . . on the payroll, all due back wages. The House was in great need of repair, shutters hanging loose, vines out over the sidewalk, leaks in the roof, etc. It was called the 'haunted house' by residents in the area"¹²³ (Figure 3-22). As expressed in a letter from the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1969, "The house is seriously deteriorated and the present owners are unable to afford the major structural repairs it needs at this time."¹²⁴

Oral historian Amelia Fry reported in 1976, "The Alva-Belmont House in Washington now is in a high crime neighborhood -- with the Senate Office Building adjacent, however, and the US Supreme Court on an adjoining block. It was such a dangerous neighborhood when I was there [in the 1960s and early 1970s] we could never carry our purses with us when we went out at night because of the probability of provoking attack. Most of the women had been mugged at least once. Alva-Belmont House itself had been broken into two or three times."¹²⁵

121 David Dismore, "July 9, 1978: Feminists Make History With Biggest-Ever March for the Equal Rights Amendment," *Founding Feminists*, 9 July 2014, accessed 2 June 2020 at <https://feminist.org/blog/index.php/2014/07/09/july-9-1978-feminists-make-history-with-biggest-ever-march-for-the-equal-rights-amendment/>.

122 "Equal Rights Amendment, Frequently Asked Questions," accessed 2 June 2020 at <https://www.equalrightsamendment.org/faq>.

123 Mary Condon Gereau to NWP Board Members, memo, 11 August 1992, NWP Records, WPC Files, Sub-Series Correspondence, Chronological Files, 1993-1996, Box 9, Chronological Files.

124 James Biddle, president, to Congressman Charles E. Bennett, 21 October 1969, National Historic Landmark File, Sewall-Belmont House, National Archives and Records Administration, accessed at <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/117691869>.

125 Amelia R. Fry, *Conversations with Alice Paul: Woman Suffrage and the Equal Rights Amendment*, xviii.



Figure 3-22. The Belmont House in 1961 (National Park Service).

The cost of maintenance led the National Woman's Party to take steps to lessen the burden. In 1959, Congressman Charles E. Bennett (Florida) and Senator J. Glenn Beall (Maryland) introduced a bill to exempt the Belmont House from federal and municipal property taxes as long as the property was owned by the NWP, on condition that the organization continued to preserve the building and make it accessible to the general public at reasonable times. On September 6, 1960, President Eisenhower signed Public Law 86-706, granting tax exemption to the NWP on the Belmont House property.¹²⁶

Although the Belmont House was in disrepair and crime was an issue, it still remained a valuable location due to its proximity to the Capitol. The federal government also recognized this and took steps to condemn the property and those around it for government expansion in the decades following World War II. This was not the first time the federal government threatened the Belmont House. In January 1931, the same month that the NWP dedicated its new headquarters, the federal government proposed to condemn the Belmont House and build a new General Accounting Office east of the Senate Office Building (now the Russell Senate Office Building, built between 1903 and 1908). After four years, the Senate rejected the appropriation request for the new building on the ground of economy and because it would require the NWP to give up its property. According to a 1935

¹²⁶ "Governmental Recognition," 7 April 1919, Woman's Party Corporation Files, Box 10, Governmental Recognition and Actions, 1979-1981.

memo, Senator Hiram Johnson (California) “had been especially stirred up by a patriotic women’s society who owned and occupied property on the square to be acquired.”¹²⁷ The NWP learned of the threat at the last minute. A local newspaper reported that Alice Paul and Anita Pollitzer organized “one of the swiftest moving lobbies in recent legislative history,” and “in a fine burst of feminine frenzy. . . ascended Capitol Hill, swished through the Senate, and by nightfall was mopping its collective brow, happy in the knowledge that not a single brick in the oldest building in Washington would be disturbed.”¹²⁸ A later account indicated that the NWP had found out about the inclusion of the property in the bill at midnight and had “flooded Congress with telegrams and phone calls appealing to the legislators’ regard for history.” *Equal Rights* reported that at a hearing before the House Committee on Buildings and Grounds, “There was not space in the Committee room for all the women who appeared at the hearing.¹²⁹ Early efforts to preserve the house often focused on the importance of its “Colonial architecture.” In 1931, prominent architects Waddy Wood and Harvey Wiley Corbett supported the NWP’s efforts to preserve the house. Wood believed that the Belmont House was an “interesting historical landmark to keep in Washington,” and Corbett wrote that “Historic buildings of such beauty as Alva Belmont House should be preserved, especially in the Capital city where America turns for inspiration and knowledge of best periods [of] American architectural history.¹³⁰

The next threat came two decades later in 1956 when Congress proposed the acquisition of Square 725, which included the Belmont House, for the future extension of the Senate Office Building. As the federal government expanded its role both nationally and internationally beginning in the 1930s, increased staff assistance resulted in crowded conditions in the Capitol and the Russell Senate Office Building. World War II delayed plans for a new Senate office building and by the end of the war, the need for additional space was urgent. In 1948, Congress acquired property east of the existing Russell Building for a second office building that would accommodate the enlarged staff. The Senate approved plans for the new building in 1949, but construction was delayed until 1956.¹³¹ A rider on the

127 “Alva Belmont House Threatened,” *Equal Rights*, 31 January 1931; “Woman’s Party to Fight Accounting Office Site,” *Evening Star*, 25 January 1931:1; “DC Jobs at Stake in Deficiency Bill Awaiting Parley,” *Evening Star*, 23 July 1935:B-1; T. S. Settle, Secretary, National Capital Planning Commission, “Capper-Crampton and other appropriations,” Memo, 24 July 1935, Box 10, Governmental Recognition and Actions, 1979-1981.

128 “Ladies’ Lobby Swoops on Senate, Unknown Washington Newspaper, clipping, 25 July 1935; Box 10, Governmental Recognition and Actions, 1979-1981.

129 “Hearing on Bill to Take Square in Which Alva Belmont House is Located,” *Equal Rights*, 7 February 1931; “Woman’s Party Fights Eviction,” *Evening Star*, 18 March 1956:D-5.

130 “Hearing on Bill to Take Square in Which Alva Belmont House is Located,” *Equal Rights*, 7 February 1931.

131 United States Senate, “Dirksen Senate Office Building,” accessed 4 April 2020 at

1956 Urgent Deficiency Appropriations Bill included the condemnation of the NWP property, including the Belmont House. Sen. Carl Hayden (D-Arizona) led the support for the rider and indicated that the Senate needed the property immediately for parking purposes and possibly later for additions to the Senate Office Building. Although the NWP was able to defeat the rider with the support of Sen. Allen Ellender (D-Louisiana), a bill authorizing the condemnation of the property remained in front of the Senate Public Works Committee.¹³² Once again, the NWP lobbied to save the house. Letters indicate that the NWP reached out to the American Institute of Architects, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the Capitol Hill Restoration Society for support.¹³³ In 1958, the Senate exempted the Belmont House from the bill. According to the *Evening Star*, "Imminent condemnation of the house site was averted by negotiations between the amendment sponsor, Senator Hayden and the [NWP]." The newspaper noted that the passage of the bill did not preclude future legislation from including the acquisition of the Belmont House.¹³⁴

Recognizing after their win in 1958 that a new threat from Senate expansion was imminent, Alice Paul and National Woman's Party members began lobbying in the early 1960s to have the Belmont House recognized as a National Historic Landmark, evidenced by letters between the National Woman's Party and the National Park Service.¹³⁵ In 1961, members reached out to the National Park Service to inquire about securing landmark status for the Belmont House.¹³⁶ At the request of Alice Paul, NPS historians met with members of the NWP to discuss the historic significance of the house. The NWP established a committee to lead this effort, headed by member Inez Gardner. Correspondence suggests that the NPS and NWP initially thought that the house's significance was related to its architecture, its association with Andrew Gallatin, and its role in the War of 1812. By 1965, this sentiment shifted. National Capital Region director T. Sutton Jett wrote,

We believe that this structure is of exceptional value in commemorating the efforts of the National Woman's Party. The Women's suffrage movement is a neglected phase of American social history. The activities of the National Woman's Party seem to us to have contributed materially to the Federal extension of the vote to women. Although the National Woman's Party did not

<https://www.senate.gov/visiting/common/generic/DirksenBuilding.htm>.

132 National Woman's Party Fights Eviction," *Evening Star*, 18 March 1956: D-5.

133 History, Legislative - Congressional Attempts to Take Sewall-Belmont House by Eminent Domain, Box 10, National Woman's Party Papers.

134 "Senate Approves Measure Sparing Belmont House," *Evening Star*, 24 June 1958:25.

135 National Historic Landmark File, Sewall-Belmont House, National Archives and Records Administration, accessed at <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/117691869>.

136 Chief, Division of Interpretation, NPS, to Superintendent, National Capital Parks, 3 March 1961, National Archives.

occupy the Alva Belmont House until 1929, after the suffrage goal had been attained, we believe that the structure qualifies for inclusion in the Registry of National Historic Landmarks. Of the former headquarters of the National Woman's Party, only the Cameron or Ogle Tayloe House at 21 Madison Place, NW, survives. This building, however, is important for reasons other than its association with the National Woman's Party. Moreover, the existence of the Alva Belmont House at Capitol Hill has been in jeopardy more than once. For these reasons, we recommend that this structure be recognized as possessing national significance.¹³⁷

The NPS Advisory Board on National Parks considered the significance of the Alva Belmont House in 1965 and concluded that it did not possess national historical significance under the Historic Sites Act of 1935. Although the building did not meet the criteria for national significance, the NPS indicated that it did “fully meet the less restrictive criteria for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.” By 1968, the District of Columbia's Joint Committee on Landmarks (now the DC Historic Preservation Review Board) designated the Belmont House a “Category II landmark of importance which contributes significantly to the cultural heritage and visual beauty of the District of Columbia.” In 1971, the National Capital Planning Commission nominated the property to the National Register.¹³⁸

In 1969, NPS Chief Historian Robert M. Utley reached out to the NWP to express interest in the Belmont House as part of a National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings, which was conducting a survey of “historical properties significant in illustrating the historic development of American architecture.” At that time, staff historian Charles W. Snell was investigating structures that illustrate the development of colonial architecture and wanted to visit the Belmont House.¹³⁹ By 1970, the NPS Advisory Board determined once again that Belmont House did not meet the National Historic Landmark criteria, this time for architecture. It recommended placing it in the “Other Sites Considered” category.¹⁴⁰ In 1972, the “Sewall-Belmont House” was listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

137 T. Sutton Jett to Director, National Park Service, 4 February 1965, National Historic Landmark File, Sewall-Belmont House, National Archives and Records Administration, accessed at <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/117691869>.

138 J. E. N. Jenson to Congressman Charles E. Bennett, 21 October 1968, National Historic Landmark File, Sewall-Belmont House, National Archives and Records Administration, accessed at <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/117691869>; Suzanne Ganschinietz, Sewall-Belmont House National Register Nomination Form (Washington, DC: National Capital Planning Commission 1972).

139 Robert M. Utley to Emma Guffey Miller, 11 April 1969, National Historic Landmark File, Sewall-Belmont House, National Archives and Records Administration, accessed at <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/117691869>.

140 Robert M. Utley to Emma Guffey Miller, 27 October 1970, National Historic Landmark File, Sewall-Belmont House, National Archives and Records Administration, accessed at <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/117691869>.

The NWP efforts coincided with additional attempts by the federal government to take the NWP's property. In 1966, Congressman Chet Holifield of California introduced a bill that would change the name of the Belmont House to the "Gallatin House" after Secretary of Treasury Albert Gallatin, who lived in the house while he negotiated the Louisiana Purchase. The bill also proposed the house as the residence of the Vice President.¹⁴¹ Ultimately, Congress chose the Naval Observatory as the site of the residence, sparing the Belmont House.

A threat from the Senate Office Building expansion emerged once again in the late 1960s. Legislative reorganization after the completion of the Dirksen Senate Office Building in 1958 caused the Senate's staff to grow exponentially from approximately 2,500 workers to 7,000 by the early 1970s. The Dirksen Building, along with the older Russell Senate Office Building, both facing Constitution Avenue directly west of the Belmont House, provided less than half of the recommended floor space for each Senate office worker, resulting in the Senate acquiring auxiliary space in adjacent buildings and committees and senators with staff spread across several offices in different buildings.¹⁴² In 1968, the Senate introduced a bill for an extension of the Senate Office Building that would require the acquisition of the NWP's property. Although the bill spared the Belmont House itself, it included the two NWP rowhouses (Lots 863 and 864) on 2nd Street NW.

Once again, the NWP lobbied to save its property, an effort led by Alice Paul, then honorary chairman, and Emma Guffey Miller, president of the NWP. Paul and Miller sent numerous telegrams to members of Congress to persuade them to delay the bill. In particular, the NWP once again found support in Rep. Charles E. Bennett of Florida.¹⁴³ The NWP also had the support of the National Capital Area chapter of the National Organization of Women (NOW), who threatened to "form a ring around the Alva Belmont House."¹⁴⁴

The National Woman's Party argued that the two rowhouses were "part of the historic buildings known as the Alva Belmont House."¹⁴⁵ In particular, the NWP believed that these two houses incorporated "portions of slave quarters and

141 "Lucy Stoners Losing Ground," *Washington Post*, 25 February 1966: B2.

142 Eugene L. Meyer, "Senate Votes for Annex," *Washington Post*, 14 September 1972:B1; Mary Thornton, "Senate's New Marble Monument," *Washington Post*, 20 September 1982:A1; United States Senate, "Hart Senate Office Building," accessed 10 September 2018 at <https://www.senate.gov/visiting/common/generic/HartBuilding.htm>.

143 History, Legislative - Congressional Attempts to Take Sewall-Belmont House by Eminent Domain, Box 10, National Woman's Party Papers.

144 Elizabeth Shelton, "Woman's Party Fights Congress to Save Home," *Washington Post*, 18 September 1968:D1.

145 "Belmont Plot Thickens," *Evening Star*, 19 September 1968:49.

tobacco barn of seventeenth or eighteenth century origins.” NPS Chief Historian Robert M. Utley, along with architectural historian Dr. William J. Murtagh, examined the two houses in August 1968. Utley and Murtagh determined that neither building had any structural evidence that would date them earlier than the late nineteenth century. “They are typical of houses of the period and as such do not possess any known values that would warrant their reservation as historic structures.” Utley reported this information to Congressman Bennett and told him that “in our view the demolition of these two buildings would not harm the Belmont House itself, which is of great historical importance.”¹⁴⁶

Although the Senate passed the bill for the extension of the Dirksen Building in 1968 without any public hearings, it failed to receive the two-thirds vote in the House required for its passage.¹⁴⁷ The Senate once again voted in October 1969 to acquire land for its new office building. The Senate bill spared the Belmont House, but included the two NWP properties on 2nd Street. This time the Senate attached the land acquisition to a bill that had already cleared the House. Alice Paul responded, “We did not even have a hearing. And when we called the Senate Public Works Committee, we were told that the lots were necessary for landscaping - landscaping! for the extension!”¹⁴⁸

After the NWP elected Elizabeth Chittick as its chairman in 1971, Chittick intensified the effort to have the house designated as a National Historic Landmark. Eleanor Sneal, President of the Feminist Majority Foundation, later stated that “Elizabeth Chittick’s determination almost single-handedly saved this historic landmark [the Sewall-Belmont House] for women’s equality.”¹⁴⁹

In 1972, Congress finally approved funding for a \$47.9 million extension to the Dirksen Building.¹⁵⁰ The following year, the Senate Office Building Commission announced that San Francisco-based John Carl Warnecke & Associates would design the new office building. Although planned as an extension of the Dirksen Building, Warnecke was tasked with designing an entirely new structure connected to the Dirksen’s east side. The project also required the firm to

146 Robert M. Utley to Frank Harrison, Assistant to the Director, 8 August 1968, National Historic Landmark File, Sewall-Belmont House, National Archives and Records Administration, accessed at <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/117691869>.

147 “Belmont House Bill Fails,” *Washington Daily News*, 27 September 1968.

148 “Senate Votes to Acquire 3rd Office Building Site,” *Evening Star*, 9 October 1969.

149 Feminist News, “Trailblazing Feminist Elizabeth Chittick Dies,” 20 April 2009, accessed 29 April 2020 at <http://feminist.org/news/newsbyte/uswirestory.asp?id=11650>.

150 Eugene L. Meyer, “Senate Votes for Annex,” *Washington Post*, 14 September 1972:B1; Mary Thornton, “Senate’s New Marble Monument,” *Washington Post*, 20 September 1982:A1; United States Senate, “Hart Senate Office Building,” accessed 10 September 2018 at <https://www.senate.gov/visiting/common/generic/HartBuilding.htm>.



Figure 3-23. Construction of the Hart Senate Office Building around the Belmont House, 1977 (Architect of the Capitol).

preserve the Sewall-Belmont House and its adjacent garden.¹⁵¹ Following this charge, Warnecke designed the new Senate building around the Sewall-Belmont House. Construction on the new Senate building began in December 1975 with an anticipated completion date of late 1978 or early 1979 (Figure 3-23). In August 1976, the Senate honored retiring Sen. Philip A. Hart of Michigan by passing a resolution that named the new extension to the Dirksen Building the “Philip A. Hart Office Building.”¹⁵² While the NWP won its fight to save the Sewall-Belmont House, the two NWP rowhouses on 2nd Street did not share the same fate. The federal government demolished the buildings between 1972 and 1975 after it acquired the properties for the Senate building site.¹⁵³

In February 1974, Congressman Roy A. Taylor (North Carolina) introduced a bill (H.R. 13157) that would designate several new National Historic Sites, including the Sewall-Belmont House. Senator Henry M. Jackson (Washington) introduced a similar bill (S. 3188) in March 1974. In May, the Parks and Recreation Subcommittee of the Senate Interior and Insular Affairs Committee held an open hearing on the bill. Prior to the hearing, NWP Chairman Elizabeth Chittick wrote to numerous members of Congress to gain their support and testified in front of the committee on the NWP’s behalf. The House introduced additional legislation

151 Herbert H. Denton, “Senate Office Design Given to Warnecke,” *Washington Post*, 13 April 1973:C7; John King, “John Warnecke, Prominent Architect, Dies at 91,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 7 May 2010.

152 “Senate Honors Retiring Hart,” *Washington Post*, 31 August 1976:A4.

153 “Belmont Plot Thickens,” *Evening Star*, 19 September 1968:49.

(H.R. 14979 and H.R. 15975) in May and June. The bills had the support of several members of the House and Senate, including Congresswomen Martha Griffiths (Michigan), Bella Abzug (New York), Elizabeth Holtzman (New York), and Ella Grasso (Connecticut).¹⁵⁴ Concurrently, on May 30, 1974, the Secretary of the Interior designated the Sewall-Belmont House a National Historic Landmark. The House passed the bill in August 1974 and the Senate followed in October 1974.

Public Law 93-486, signed by President Gerald Ford on October 26, 1974, officially designated the Sewall-Belmont House a National Historic Site and authorized a cooperative agreement between the National Woman's Party and the Secretary of the Interior for the preservation and interpretation of the house. As a result, the Sewall-Belmont House became an affiliated area of the national park system with the National Park Service providing financial and technical assistance for the preservation and interpretation of the property through a series of cooperative agreements.¹⁵⁵ The act also established a ceiling of \$500,000 for the funds provided by the National Park Service.

On April 7, 1976, the NWP and the NPS held a ceremony in the garden of the Sewall-Belmont House for the official signing of the cooperative agreement between the NPS and the NWP and its designation as a National Historic Landmark. NWP President Elizabeth Chittick, Gary Earhart, Director of the National Park Service, and NPS National Capital Region Director Manus J. (Jack) Fish signed the agreement¹⁵⁶ (Figure 3-24).

THE NATIONAL WOMAN'S PARTY AND THE WOMAN'S PARTY CORPORATION, 1977 – 1996

The 1974 designation of the Sewall-Belmont House as a National Historic Landmark set in motion a series of events that changed the nature of the organization. After the cooperative agreement with the National Park Service was signed in 1977, the National Woman's Party established the Woman's Party Corporation (WPC), an entity originally designed to receive funds from the Department of the Interior and to hold the Sewall-Belmont House and the Investment and Endowment Fund. As a way to raise additional funds, the National Woman's Party began to rent out the house and garden for events, such as weddings. Since the agreement with the National Park Service required the house to be open to the public for tours, the National Woman's Party no longer offered

154 History, Legislative, HR 1357 and Public Law 93-486, Box 10, National Woman's Party Papers.

155 "Sewall-Belmont House Act of 1975," accessed at <https://www.doi.gov/ocl/s-1975>.

156 "Landmark on the Hill," *Washington Post*, 8 April 1976:47.

Figure 3-24. Gary Earhart, Jack Fish, and Elizabeth Chittick at the ceremony when the Sewall-Belmont House was designated a National Historic Landmark, 1976 (National Woman's Party).



the house as a place to stay for visiting members and guests.¹⁵⁷ The NWP moved its offices to the basement to allow the first two floors of the house to be opened to the public for tours. With lessened influence, work on the ERA minimal, and likely lack of funds, the NWP operated with a staff of two full-time and one part-time employees.¹⁵⁸

In 1977, the NWP began rehabilitating the Sewall-Belmont House with funds made possible by the cooperative agreement. The first phase of the restoration and rehabilitation of the house converted the street (basement) floor of the house into the NWP offices. The second phase began in winter 1979 and involved installing pipes, wiring, and ducts, and required “putting NWP headquarters out of operation for two months.” The third and final phase of the project began in September 1979 and included the installation of air conditioning, enlarging the terrace, replacing the brick patio, and installing a new roof.¹⁵⁹ Additional work in 1982 included the complete renovation of the kitchen, structural work on the exterior front stairs of the house, and a new iron fence.¹⁶⁰

157 Various correspondence, National Woman's Party Records, Series: Woman's Party Corp. Files, Sub-Series: Sewall-Belmont House Restoration Files, Sewall-Belmont Restoration Fund, 1973-1980, Box 13, Belmont-Paul National Woman's Equality Monument.

158 Amanda Spake, “Party of Two, Madam?” *Washington Post*, 11 October 1987:w14.

159 “Convention Postponed,” *Equal Rights*, July-August 1979.

160 “Sewall-Belmont House Restoration,” *Equal Rights*, September-October 1982.

With these improvements, the NWP encouraged members to visit its headquarters and capitalized on its new role as a museum, a goal that had been in place since the NWP dedicated the Belmont House in 1931. In the September-October 1982 issue of *Equal Rights*, the NWP wrote that the house was “a national museum where people can come and identify with heroines of the women’s rights movement, view the memorabilia of the Suffrage and Equal Rights Campaigns, and learn of the history of the women’s fight for equality.” With the house now open to the public, the NWP hired docents to provide tours of the house from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesday-Friday and on weekends from noon until 4 p.m. The NWP reported in the fall of 1982 that over the past year it welcomed guests from all over the world and that the month of June brought 671 visitors to the house.¹⁶¹ Over 8,000 people visited the Sewall-Belmont House in both 1984 and 1985.¹⁶²

In January 1985, the NWP welcomed hundreds of friends and supporters at the Sewall-Belmont House to celebrate what would have been the 100th birthday of Alice Paul. NWP President Elizabeth Chittick opened the program by noting that “Alice Paul was a very, very special woman. . . who truly gave her whole life to the cause of eliminating discrimination against women. . . she was, without knowing it, a great pioneer, fighting for equality for women. . . she has left us with a heritage to fulfill - passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. Her spirit remains our inspiration.” At the celebration, the NWP honored Sally Ride, the first American woman in space, and Associate Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor, the first woman appointed to the United States Supreme Court, as “pioneer achievers” in the spirit of Alice Paul.¹⁶³

For the first time in its 72 years of existence, the NWP welcomed men as members beginning in the fall of 1985. The NWP voted to permit men at the 26th National Plenary Session and revised the by-laws governing membership to read “persons” instead of “women.” The first man to apply for membership was Gerald Gereau, husband of NWP member Mary Condon Gereau. The event received great publicity and several news organizations, including the Associated Press, interviewed Elizabeth Chittick. The local ABC News station also covered the event.¹⁶⁴ Gereau went on to become the first man elected to the NWP board in 1991.¹⁶⁵

161 “The Sewall-Belmont House - National Woman’s Party Headquarters,” *Equal Rights*, September-October 1982.

162 “What did the National Woman’s Party Achieve for Women in 1984?” *Equal Rights*, January - February 1985; “What did the National Woman’s Party Achieve for Women in 1985?” *Equal Rights*, March-April 1985.

163 “Centennial Celebration,” *Equal Rights*, January-February 1985.

164 “Historic First,” *Equal Rights*, September-October 1985.

165 “First Male Elected to NWP Board,” *Equal Rights*, Fall 1991.

Figure 3-25. From left: Dorothy Height, Elizabeth Chittick, Sarah McLendon, and Helen Thomas, at the 1986 Equality Day celebration (*Equal Rights July-August 1986*).



Although the NWP continued its support of the ERA during the 1980s, it turned to a “low key approach” and was in a holding pattern. As expressed by Elizabeth Chittick in 1987, “There comes a time when you realize you should not waste your time and energy if you can’t do it. But someone has to keep the ERA alive. We are the catalyst that has kept it going.” In 1988 when asked if the NWP was still active, Chittick responded, “Of course we’re still active. . . We don’t aspire to marching or shouting and yelling on behalf of the ERA. What it takes now to be effective is political clout, friendship, and getting Congress and the Senate to agree.”¹⁶⁶

Instead of lobbying, the NWP continued to educate the public on the ERA. In 1984 alone the NWP distributed thousands of free copies of the publication “Answers to Questions about the ERA” to states. Members participated in speaking engagements at colleges, community groups, and other organizations on the ERA and related topics. The NWP served as a national resource center on the ERA, suffrage history, Alice Paul, and other women’s issues, and responded to thousands of requests from members, researchers, organizations, Congress, media, and students. The NWP also kept the media informed on the ERA and other equality issues by granting interviews and writing articles to news outlets including NBC News, Voice of America, the *New York Times*, and the *Washington Post*. Without a membership drive, the NWP was able to increase its membership in 1984 by 20 percent through networking.¹⁶⁷

166 Amanda Spake, “Party of Two, Madam?” *Washington Post*, 11 October 1987:w14; “Woman’s Party Still Fighting,” *The Sentinel*, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, 27 September 1988:B5.

167 “What did the National Woman’s Party Achieve for Women in 1984?” *Equal Rights*, January - February 1985.

The NWP also continued to celebrate its milestones and role in the suffrage and equal rights movements. Every year since Congress passed a resolution creating Women's Equality Day in 1973, the NWP commemorated the event recognizing the adoption of the 19th Amendment. In August 1986, the NWP honored Equality Day with a celebration in the decorated and tented garden of the Sewall-Belmont House (Figure 3-25). Over 45 major national men's and women's organizations sponsored the celebration, including the Democratic and Republican national committees, and several news organizations covered the event. The program ended with "a rousing finale" when Dr. Dorothy Height, President of the National Council of Negro Women, led the audience in singing the suffrage song "Shoulder to Shoulder" and then "We Shall Overcome" "as all held hands and joined in a chorus of unity."¹⁶⁸

In August 1988, the NWP celebrated its 75th anniversary with a champagne reception in the tented garden of the Sewall-Belmont House. The theme for the event was "The Suffrage Years- Alice Paul" and "The ERA Years - Elizabeth Chittick," and featured guest speakers and presentations covering suffrage and equal rights. Former First Ladies Betty Ford and Rosalynn Carter sponsored the event with co-sponsors Sen. Barbara Mikulski, Sen. Nancy Kassebaum, and 14 congresswomen.¹⁶⁹

After 18 years as NWP president and being elected 7 times, Elizabeth Chittick stepped down as president in 1989. At its 28th Biennial Convention in Washington, the NWP elected Mary Eastwood as president to replace Chittick. After her resignation, Chittick automatically became honorary NWP president.¹⁷⁰ At the convention's reception, the NWP honored Chittick for her dedication to the NWP, her work for the ERA and other women's issues, and her instrumental role in getting the Sewall-Belmont House designated as a National Historic Landmark.¹⁷¹ Although she was no longer NWP president, Chittick continued to serve as president of the Woman's Party Corporation, a position she held since 1979.

168 "Equality Day Celebration," *Equal Rights*, July-August 1986.

169 "Diamond Jubilee," *Equal Rights*, May-June 1988; "75 Years of Leading the Struggle, 1913-1988," *Equal Rights*, July-August 1988.

170 "NWP Members Hold 28th National Convention," *Equal Rights*, September-October 1989.

171 "Elizabeth Chittick Honored at Convention Reception," *Equal Rights*, September-October 1989.



Figure 3-26. Dorothy Ferrell (left), newly elected NWP President, receives the gavel of Alice Paul from former President Mary Eastwood (right), 1991 (*Equal Rights*, Fall 1991).

THE WOMAN'S PARTY CORPORATION

In the early 1970s, the National Woman's Party recognized the need for a separate entity to manage the funds for the restoration and general maintenance of the Sewall-Belmont House and in 1973, the NWP created the Sewall-Belmont House Restoration Fund. At its 1977 convention, the NWP approved the National Council's recommendation to establish a separate corporation to hold the Sewall-Belmont House and the Investment and Endowment Fund for the purpose of "supporting, carrying out, and maintaining the objective of the National Woman's Party to secure for women complete equality with men under the law and in all human relationships." NWP board member Marguerite Rawalt warned that "the NWP would be deeding a quit-claim deed, with all rights, title and interest in real and personal property." Regardless, the resolution was unanimously approved.¹⁷² On May 12, 1978, the Articles of Incorporation of the WPC were filed in the District of Columbia. A year later on May 26, 1979, the NWP granted, in fee simple, the lot known as 144 Constitution Avenue NE to the WPC.¹⁷³ With the creation of the WPC, the NWP eventually dissolved the Sewall-Belmont House Restoration Fund.

¹⁷² "Historical Background Sewall-Belmont House Press Information," 20 September 1993, NWP Records, WPC Files, Sub-Series Correspondence, Chronological Files, 1993-1996, Box 9, Chronological Files.

¹⁷³ David Golley, Internal Revenue Service, to the Woman's Party Corporation, letter, 10 June 1992, Sub-Series Correspondence, Chronological Files, 1993-1996, Box 9, Chronological Files.

Several sources indicate that the NWP created the Woman's Party Corporation in response to an "anticipated takeover of the NWP by more radical elements of the women's movement." The *Washington Post* later reported that this organization was the National Organization of Women (NOW) and that another "unsubstantiated rumor was that some NOW members wanted control of the Sewall-Belmont House to convert it to an abortion clinic."¹⁷⁴ Mary Eastwood, President of the NWP after Elizabeth Chittick, later stated that the NWP was worried at the time that "the NWP membership would be packed with members of some other organization (e.g. NOW) in order to take over the [Sewall-Belmont House] and divert it to some inappropriate use such as a shelter for abused women."¹⁷⁵

The established role of the WPC was to oversee the completion of the restoration of the house with the funds from the NPS and to take care of overall maintenance of the public areas of the house and the library. In addition, the WPC would acquire additional furniture and artifacts related to the feminist movement and hire interpreters knowledgeable in the history of the feminist movement for tours of the house. The WPC would also publish educational brochures about the house and the feminist movement.¹⁷⁶ As a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, the WPC could legally receive tax-exempt donations for renovating and maintaining the house. The NWP, in comparison, was a 501(c)4 social welfare organization, and could engage in advocacy and lobbying activities.

In the beginning, Elizabeth Chittick served as both NWP and WPC president from 1979-1989 and resided at the Sewall-Belmont House, in an apartment on the third floor. From May 1989 to August 1991, Mary Eastwood was President of the NWP while Mrs. Chittick remained WPC president. In August 1991, the NWP elected Dorothy Gevinson as its president (Figure 3-26). After Chittick resigned, Mary Condon Gereau took over as president of the WPC on October 1, 1991, the beginning of the WPC fiscal year.¹⁷⁷ Like Ms. Chittick before her, Gereau lived

174 Sarah Booth Conroy, "A House Divided," *Washington Post*, 20 September 1993:B3; "Historical Background Sewall-Belmont House Press Information," 20 September 1993, NWP Records, WPC Files, Sub-Series Correspondence, Chronological Files, 1993-1996, Box 9, Chronological Files.

175 Mary Eastwood to Mary Condon Gereau and Dorothy Ferrell-Gevinson, 25 February 1992, NWP Records, WPC Files, Sub-Series Correspondence, Chronological Files, 1993-1996, Box 9, Chronological Files.

176 "Woman's Party Corporation," Box 9, Sub-Series Correspondence 1993-1996, National Woman's Party Records, BEPA.

177 "Historical Background of the Relationship of the Woman's Party Corporation and the National Woman's Party, 1992, NWP Records, WPC Files, Sub-Series Correspondence, Chronological Files, 1993-1996, Box 9, Chronological Files.

on the third floor of the Belmont House. Gereau's husband Gerald, who was an NWP board member, also lived in the third-floor apartment.

Adequate funds to restore and maintain the house was one of the WPC's biggest concerns. The 1974 legislation establishing the cooperative agreement between the NWP and the NPS included an appropriation ceiling of \$500,000. As of fiscal year 1988, the NPS estimated that it had actually appropriated over \$1.1 million to the NWP for the restoration and maintenance of the Sewall-Belmont House.¹⁷⁸ Congress extended the funding ceiling to \$2 million in 1988 (Public Law 100-355 - June 28, 1988). Until 1989, the Sewall-Belmont House received an annual line item appropriation in the Interior appropriation bill under the National Park Service. After 1989, the National Park Service provided funds taken from its grant program. Despite requests for additional funding each year, the annual amount the NPS provided to the WPC remained around \$53,000. Although the WPC met additional costs by renting the house for events, during the recession of the early 1980s the WPC's income critically decreased. In 1993, the WPC reported that over the last 10 years costs had risen by 50 percent.¹⁷⁹

The relationship between the NWP and the WPC began to unravel in 1992 when the United States Internal Revenue Service (IRS) proposed to revoke the tax-exempt status of the WPC after a review of the operational activities between the WPC and the NWP. Records indicate that this was mostly due to the lack of proper record keeping of the WPC's financial support of the NWP, the commingling of operational activities, such as the sharing of the office administrator for both organizations, and the lack of a rental agreement between the two organizations for the NWP's use of the house. In particular, as a 501(c)(3), the WPC could not support lobbying or political activities of the NWP.¹⁸⁰ The threat of losing its tax-exempt status created a major friction between the two organizations that was never repaired.

The WPC later stated that the two entities operated separately and distinctly with no issues from the WPC's creation in 1977-1979 until 1992. One of the problems was that from 1978 until 1989, the NWP and the WPC shared the same president, Elizabeth Chittick. According to the WPC, whenever the NWP needed funds,

178 United States Congress, United States Congressional Serial Set, Serial Number 13869, Senate Reports Nos. 322-363, 100th Congress, 2nd Session, January 25 - October 22, 1988, "Sewall-Belmont House National Historic Site," (Washington, DC: Government Printing Press, 1990), 2.

179 Undated, untitled, Box 10, Government Actions and Recognitions.

180 Jesse L. Paredes, accountant, to Mary Condon Gereau, WPC President, 14 April 1993, NWP Records, WPC Files, Sub-Series Correspondence, Chronological Files, 1993-1996, Box 9, Chronological Files.

Chittick just transferred money from the WPC accounts. The IRS audit revealed that this was against the law.¹⁸¹

In July 1993, the WPC learned that it would not lose its tax-exempt status as long as it did not provide any more funds to the NWP without documentation proving that the funds were used for non-legislative projects.¹⁸² According to the WPC, the NWP and its board members “refused to apply properly for funds for educational and non-political purposes and have refused to respond to requests for how funds previously granted were utilized.” Consequently, the WPC did not provide any financial support to the NWP in 1993.¹⁸³

With dwindling funds, the NWP was concerned that the loss of the WPC's 501(c)(3) status would result in the Sewall-Belmont House and its assets being donated to another non-profit organization that could not be transferred back to the NWP due to its 501(c)(4) status. The WPC's Articles of Incorporation stated that if the WPC dissolved, the house and its assets would be transferred back to the NWP, but only if it had a 501(c)(3) tax exemption. The NWP proposed that the two organizations merge and the NWP seek 501(c)(3) status.¹⁸⁴ NWP President Dorothy Ferrell-Gevinson established the “Ad Hoc Majority Committee of the National Woman's Party to Hasten the Return of the WPC to the Party Along With Our Property and Assets” to research the history of the WPC, its fiduciary responsibility to the NWP, and to find ways to merge the NWP and the WPC. The committee later reported to Ferrell-Gevinson and NWP members that the only way for the NWP to reclaim “its heritage,” the Sewall-Belmont House, and its permanent fund was to become a 501(c)(3) and to dissolve the WPC. The NWP felt that this was necessary because the WPC refused to financially support the NWP or let the NWP use the house for fundraising purposes and claimed that it had no fiduciary responsibility to the NWP.¹⁸⁵

At the 1993 NWP National Convention, members voted 4 to 1 to merge the two organizations.¹⁸⁶ However, 11 of the 14 WPC board members stated that they did

181 Mary Condon Gereau, WPC President, to Butler Franklin, 8 October 1993, NWP Records, WPC Files, Sub-Series Correspondence, Chronological Files, 1993-1996, Box 9, Chronological Files.

182 Mary Condon Gereau, WPC President, to Butler Franklin, 8 October 1993, NWP Records, WPC Files, Sub-Series Correspondence, Chronological Files, 1993-1996, Box 9, Chronological Files.

183 Historical Background, Sewall-Belmont House Press Information, 20 September 1993, NWP Records, WPC Files, Sub-Series Correspondence, Chronological Files, 1993-1996, Box 9, Chronological Files.

184 Dorothy Ferrell-Gevinson to NWP Board of Directors, 17 June 1992, NWP Records, WPC Files, Sub-Series Correspondence, Chronological Files, 1993-1996, Box 9, Chronological Files.

185 Helen Arnold, “NWP President's Report,” *Equal Rights*, 7, no. 2 (Fall 1994), 1.

186 Helen Arnold, “NWP President's Report,” *Equal Rights*, 7, no. 2 (Fall 1994), 1.

not support the merger. Consequently, the NWP terminated their membership. The WPC's bylaws stated that board members must be members of the NWP, thus, the three remaining board members and party loyalists proceeded to elect a new WPC board to regain the NWP's assets. Remaining members elected Paula Felt as the President of the WPC. With the termination of Mary Condon Gereau's NWP membership, the NWP also terminated her position as President of the WPC and stated that she had to vacate the third floor apartment of the Sewall-Belmont House. The WPC countered by voting to change its bylaws to eliminate the NWP membership requirement."¹⁸⁷

Mary Eastwood, then honorary president of the NWP, was appalled that the NWP's executive committee proposed to terminate the membership of Gerald Gereau and Delores Burton, who served as treasurer and assistant treasurer of the NWP. Eastwood wrote,

It seems to me that the Executive Committee has jumped at the chance to try and punish the only man and only minority woman on the Board, while tolerating the more important mistakes, misstatements, innuendoes and violations of our by-laws by others who are white and female. Holding men and minority women to a higher standard of behavior while requiring a lesser degree of responsibility for actions by white women constitutes discrimination based on sex and race, and is contrary to our goal "to secure for women complete equality with men under the law and in all human relationships."¹⁸⁸

Tensions escalated in the spring of 1993. Mary Condon Gereau sent a memo to select WPC Board Members that she had changed all outside locks to the Sewall-Belmont House and moved all of the WPC files to her apartment. She also hired a uniformed guard. Gereau accused Paula Felt of withdrawing substantial funds from WPC accounts and believed that the NWP had either stolen or duplicated the corporate seal of the WPC to do this¹⁸⁹ In September 1993, the WPC obtained a preliminary injunction from the DC Superior Court that restored the former WPC board and returned control of the Sewall-Belmont House to the WPC. The court order also allowed WPC President Gereau and her husband, Gerald, to continue living in the house.¹⁹⁰ The NWP eventually counter sued to regain

187 Sarah Booth Conroy, "A House Divided," *Washington Post*, 20 September 1993:B3; Paul Felt to Mary Condon Gereau, letter, 24 May 1993, NWP Records, WPC Files, Sub-Series Correspondence, Chronological Files, 1993-1996, Box 9, Chronological Files.

188 Mary Eastwood to Members of the NWP Board of Directors, memo, 15 March 1993, NWP Records, WPC Files, Sub-Series Correspondence, Chronological Files, 1993-1996, Box 9, Chronological Files.

189 Mary Condon Gereau to Selected WPC Board Members, memo, 31 May 1993, NWP Records, WPC Files, Sub-Series Correspondence, Chronological Files, 1993-1996, Box 9, Chronological Files.

190 Sarah Booth Conroy, "A House Divided," *Washington Post*, 20 September 1993:B3;

control over its trust assets held by the corporation including the house and funds.¹⁹¹

By the fall of 1994, the NWP was virtually bankrupt, with only a small grant from the Marjorie Cook Foundation allowing the NWP to keep its offices at headquarters open part-time and to remain involved in some cooperative projects. As the lawsuit continued, the NWP reached out to members to contribute financially as well as assist the NWP to find people and foundations to help the NWP continue its educational programs. NWP President Helen Arnold stated in the fall 1994 issue of *Equal Rights*, "I am determined that the National Woman's Party will survive the 75th anniversary of obtaining suffrage for women and will be able to educate the country on the need for obtaining equality between men and women in every part of life"¹⁹²

THE SEWALL-BELMONT HOUSE AND MUSEUM, 1996-2016

In October 1996, the NWP and the WPC finally reached an out-of-court settlement that resulted in the dissolution of the WPC and the transfer of the Sewall-Belmont House back to the NWP. The NWP ceased its decades-long lobbying activities and became a non-profit, nonpolitical, educational organization eligible for 501c(3) status. This new status substantially changed what had been the focus of the organization since 1916, when Alice Paul and Lucy Burns established the NWP. Despite the internal conflict surrounding the NWP and the WPC, the NWP had continued its efforts for the passage of the ERA through the early 1990s, serving as the clearing house for the amendment for the ERA Summit, an informal coalition of 20 national women's organizations, and sponsoring other events related to women's issues.¹⁹³ Although no longer allowed to lobby, the NWP could continue educating the public on the importance of the ERA.

After four years of litigation, the NWP returned to the Sewall-Belmont House by the fall of 1997. Under the leadership of NWP President Dorothy Ferrell and Executive Director Paula Felt, the NWP regained its footing and sought to increase its role as a museum dedicated to women's equality. In its first edition of *Equal Rights* in 1997, Executive Director Paula Felt wrote, "the National Woman's Party has once again survived a court battle and the Sewall-Belmont House is ours

191 Sarah Booth Conroy, "A House Divided," *Washington Post*, 20 September 1993:B3.

192 Helen Arnold, "NWP President's Report," *Equal Rights*, 7, no. 2 (Fall 1994), 1.

193 "ERA Summit Looks Toward Possible New Strategies," *Equal Rights*, Summer 1992; Sonia Pressman Fuentes, "House of History," accessed 2 September 2020 at http://www.erraticimpact.com/~feminism/html/FUENTES_articles_house_history.htm.

to have, hold, and cherish.” Lack of maintenance and neglect during the litigation required much-needed repairs to the property including termite remediation and the installation of a sump pump in the boiler room due to water issues. In January 1997, 36 Marines helped the NWP with work on the grounds, painting, and moving furniture. News organizations, including CNN, picked up the story. The NWP resumed tours of the Sewall-Belmont House, hired two new docents, and opened a new gift shop. The NWP also reestablished its relationship with the National Park Service and began working with the NPS on the interpretation of the house. Bookings of the house for receptions resumed and the NWP expected them to bring in between \$40,000 and \$50,000 and thousands of visitors by the year’s end. Executive Director Paula Felt reported that the NWP signed up new party members and continued to open its doors to various women’s organizations to the historic house. Felt stated, “The Party is working to make the Sewall-Belmont House the central location in Washington and in the country to educate the public about the struggle for women’s equality and the Equal Rights Amendment. The House is quickly becoming a “beehive of activity” and we look forward to the upcoming self-defense classes, lecture series, seminars, and other events that are scheduled.”¹⁹⁴

In the fall of 1997, the NWP announced the success of an exhibit at the Sewall-Belmont House on African American Suffrage for Black and women’s history months, developed in partnership with the DC Commission for Women, Friends of the DC Commission for Women, and the National Park Service. Back in 1991, Sewall-Belmont House docent Fiona Manchand wrote to WPC President Mary Gereau about the lack of representation of Black women in the house’s exhibits. Manchand expressed that during her year as a docent, she greeted “many faces” through “our stain-glassed door” and while most of the faces were White, “some have been persons of color.” Manchand was not only “embarrassed” but also “personally ashamed that women of color are not represented in the Sewall-Belmont House; a museum dedicated to women.” Manchand wrote, “I have been asked at least three times why African-Americans are not represented here. I must stumble through my tour to answer this question and I feel I should not have to.” At that time, Manchand recommended that the WPC “seek a new acquisition representing the achievements” of persons of color to complete the museum.¹⁹⁵ The NWP and WPC responded, and as part of Black History Month in February 1992, the NPS loaned a portrait of Frederick Douglass to be displayed at the Sewall-Belmont House. Robert Stanton, Director of the NPS National Capital

194 “Executive Director’s Report,” and “President’s Message,” *Equal Rights*, Fall 1997.

195 Memo from Fiona Machand to Mary Gereau, ca. Aug 1991, NWP Records, WPC Files, Sub-Series Correspondence, Chronological Files, 1993-1996, Box 9, Chronological Files.



Figure 3-27. Steps from the Occoquan Women's Workhouse installed at Sewall-Belmont house, November 1998 (National Woman's Party).

Region, and Gentry Davis, Superintendent of National Capital Parks-East, presented the portrait to the WPC. This was the first time that a man and a Black American had been prominently displayed in the Sewall-Belmont House.¹⁹⁶

The 1997 African American Suffrage exhibit continued the NWP's efforts to be more inclusive. The statue of Sojourner Truth and the portrait of Frederick Douglass, both already on display at the house, were the centerpiece of the exhibit, which included a framed exhibit piece featuring four Black suffragist leaders: Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Mary Church Terrell, Victoria Earle Matthews, and Nannie Helen Burroughs. The National Park Service donated additional portraits including Mary Burnett Talbert, Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin, Harriet Tubman, Gertrude Bustill Mossell, Mary Church Terrell, and Sojourner Truth.¹⁹⁷

The NWP continued to rebuild and prepare a foundation for its growth and stability at the end of the 1990s and early 2000s. In September 1998, it reopened and rededicated the Florence Bayard Hilles Feminist Library, with Lynn Sherr of ABC News' *20/20* delivering the keynote address. Fundraising continued to be a high priority. To expand its capacity and draw for events, the NWP installed a canopy with side walls over the existing garden patio and installed a 30 x 60 tent in the garden. In November 1998, steps that once led to the Occoquan Women's

¹⁹⁶ Mary Condon Gereau to WPC Board Members, memo, 27 March 1992, NWP Records, WPC Files, Sub-Series Correspondence, Chronological Files, 1993-1996, Box 9, Chronological Files.

¹⁹⁷ "African American Suffrage Exhibit Successful," *Equal Rights*, Fall 1997.

Workhouse and Hospital were donated to the NWP and placed on the grounds in front of the Sewall-Belmont House (Figure 3-27). The donation followed the scheduled demolition of Lorton Prison, the location of the workhouse, where NWP members were jailed for picketing the White House. The NWP planned to use the stairs as the base for a sculpture garden at the house to “commemorate the courageous women who were imprisoned and force fed - all for the radical notion that women should be able to vote.” The intention was to carve in stone the names of all who were imprisoned and to locate and contact the women’s descendents. To commence the search, the NWP planned to use its new website.¹⁹⁸ Interpretation of the house improved under President Dorothy Ferrell’s leadership with the creation of an education center and the screening of the 1995 documentary film on the NWP and the suffrage movement “We Were Arrested, Of Course!” at the start of every tour.¹⁹⁹ By this time, the NWP moved the majority of its offices to the third floor of the house, allowing the basement rooms to be primarily used for education and tour purposes.

In October 1998, Congress included the Sewall-Belmont House in the \$30 million Save America’s Treasures (SAT) program. Established by Executive Order 13072, SAT was part of President Bill Clinton’s White House National Millennium Commemoration and a public-private partnership between the White House, the National Park Service, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. SAT focused on bringing public attention to national heritage and preserving nationally significant intellectual and cultural artifacts as well as nationally significant historic structures and sites. The Sewall-Belmont House was among the first sites and artifacts included in the program, along with the Star Spangled Banner, an honor that acting NWP President Marty Langelan stated was a “major breakthrough for women’s history.” Of the \$3 million, \$500,000 was earmarked for the Sewall-Belmont House.²⁰⁰ The following year, as the NWP celebrated the 70th anniversary of the Sewall-Belmont House as its headquarters, the party faced a tremendous financial challenge to raise the matching funds required for the SAT grant by September 2000. Optimistically, the NWP began developing the Request for Proposals for a much-needed Historic Structures Report and interviewing architects, historians, and museum specialists for the preservation work. Langelan stated, “The National Woman’s Party is the grandmother of American women’s rights organizations. It is up to us to reach out to all women and women’s organizations to help save women’s history.” In addition, the NWP

198 “Library Rededication Planned,” and “Executive Director’s Report,” *Equal Rights*, Fall 1998; “President’s Report,” *Equal Rights*, Winter 1998.

199 “NWP Board of Directors Thanks Dorothy Ferrell,” *Equal Rights*, Spring 1999.

200 “President’s Report,” *Equal Rights*, Winter 1998; National Park Service, “Save America’s Treasures,” accessed 8 April 2020 at <https://www.nps.gov/articles/save-america-s-treasures.htm>

received a \$23,000 increase in its annual grant from the National Park Service to “support the preservation, maintenance, and interpretation” of the house,” the first increase since the start of the cooperative agreement between the NWP and NPS in 1974.²⁰¹

Although no longer able to lobby in support of the Equal Rights Amendment, the NWP continued its support by educating women and visitors about the amendment as well as hosting events that focused on the history of the women’s rights movement and brought attention to the history of the NWP. In late 1998, NWP President Dorothy Ferrell testified before the Presidential Commission on the Celebration of Women in American History, established by President Bill Clinton in July 1998 to recommend the best ways to acknowledge and celebrate the roles of women in American history. Ferrell emphasized the heritage of the NWP and its headquarters and the NWP’s role in the suffrage movement. She recommended that the commission use the Sewall-Belmont House as a vital resource in its efforts and offered the Florence Bayard Hilles Feminist Library as a research tool.²⁰²

In 1999, the Commission on the Celebration of Women in American History honored the NWP by selecting it as one of six outstanding women’s heritage organizations nationwide. The Commission Report, issued in May 1999, noted the NWP’s “extraordinary collection” of historic archives and artifacts and described the Sewall-Belmont House as a “unique museum celebrating the struggle for women’s rights.”²⁰³ In May 1999, NASA astronaut Ellen Ochoa made history when she brought an original suffrage banner, used by NWP members to picket the White House, with her on a mission on the NASA Space Shuttle Discovery (Figure 3-28). Ochoa toured the house the previous fall as part of the Commission on the Celebration of Women in American History and decided to publicize the Commission’s work of preserving and promoting women’s history by bringing a suffrage banner into space.²⁰⁴

By the 2000 deadline, the NWP raised the necessary matching funds for the Save America’s Treasures grant, in part due to generous donations from the Marjorie Cook Foundation, the Kiplinger Foundation, as well as individual members.²⁰⁵ Restoration work on the house began in 2001 with the installation

201 “President’s Letter,” and “Millennium Project Includes Belmont House,” *Equal Rights*, Spring 1999.

202 “Celebrating Women in American History,” *Equal Rights*, 98 No. 4 (Winter 1998):1.

203 “Commission Highlights Sewall-Belmont House,” *Equal Rights*, Summer 1999.

204 “Suffrage Banner Goes up With Space Shuttle,” *Equal Rights*, Summer 1999.

205 “Sewall-Belmont House is an American Treasure,” *Equal Rights*, Spring 2000.

Figure 3-28. Ellen Ochoa (l), Julie Payette, and Tamara Jernigan, with National Women's Party banner on the Space Shuttle Discovery, 1999 (National Archives, Record Group 255).



of new mechanical systems, the replacement of the roof, and improvements to the kitchen wing. Work continued until 2004 with the exterior restoration of the house, including repointing and repair of the brick walls, restoration of windows and doors, reinforcement of the attic floor, addition of an accessible restroom in the kitchen wing, and restoration of the building's slate mansard roof.²⁰⁶ The estimated cost of the project was \$4.5 million, which included funds from the Save America's Treasures grant and the matching funds, two \$500,000 appropriations from Congress, private donations, and funds raised from renting the house for events.²⁰⁷

In 2003, under the direction of NWP President Marty Langelan and Sewall-Belmont House and Museum Executive Director Angela Gilchrist, the National Woman's Party reintroduced the NWP's Alice Award. The NWP first introduced the award in 1975 when it honored First Lady Betty Ford. Other recipients included First Lady Rosalynn Carter, Lieutenant Governor Martha Griffiths of Michigan, Elizabeth Chittick, and Marguerite Rawalt, but the NWP discontinued the tradition in the 1990s.²⁰⁸ From 2003 until 2018, the NWP presented the annual Alice Award and Voice for Women Award in honor of the NWP's founder Alice Paul "to distinguished women who have made outstanding contributions in breaking barriers and setting new precedents for women" (Figure 3-29 and Figure 3-30). The event brought new attention, relevancy, and donors to the Sewall-Belmont House and the National Woman's Party. The event became the National Woman's Party's largest annual fundraising event, averaging 250 participants at the award luncheon, held in the garden.²⁰⁹

206 Ehrenkrantz Eckstut & Kuhn Architects, *Sewall-Belmont House Master Plan* (January 2006), II-1.

207 Rachel Osterman, "Historic Facelift," *Rollcall*, 22 July 2002:1.

208 "Chittick Honored with Alice Paul Award," *Equal Rights*, September-October 1985.

209 National Park Service, *Sewall-Belmont House Feasibility Study* (2015), 24.



Figure 3-29. 2003 Alice Award Recipient Evelyn H. Lauder with the bust of Alice Paul, 2003 (Lana Lawrence, National Woman's Party).



Figure 3-30. 2009 Alice Award recipient Hillary Clinton (National Woman's Party).

Table 2. Recipients of the Alice Award and Voice for Women Award.

YEAR	RECIPIENT
2003	Evelyn H. Lauder
2004	Billie Jean King
2005	Tipper Gore
2006	Cokie Roberts, Susan Stamberg, Nina Totenberg & Linda Wertheimer
2007	Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison & Senator Mary Landrieu
2008	Katie Couric
2009	Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton
2010	Speaker of the United States House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi
2011	Senator Dianne Feinstein & Senator Olympia J. Snowe
2012	Mrs. Laura W. Bush
2013	Senator Susan Collins & Senator Kirsten Gillibrand
2014	Senator Barbara Mikulski
2015	Senator Patty Murray & Senator Lisa Murkowski
2016	Senator Barbara Boxer & Senator Shelley Moore Capito
2017	Secretary of Transportation Elaine L. Chao
2018	Dr. Janet L. Yellen

The National Woman's Party, like many non-profit organizations, suffered from a decline in donations following the 2008 global financial crisis. Without an endowment fund, the NWP's survival depended solely on its annual fundraising efforts. The NWP Board recognized that the future of the Sewall-Belmont House and its vast collection "rested on the shoulders of an engaged, committed board" and the "future of both had become tenuous."²¹⁰ As a result of efforts by the Board, the NWP received almost \$2.4 million in federal funding including between 2010 and 2013, covering both regular operations and major projects. In addition to the \$97,000 in annual funding from the NPS, the National Woman's Party received a one-time statutory aid of \$1 million in fiscal year 2010, administered through the NPS, for the purpose of fire and life safety improvements, preservation and collection management, as well as enhanced visitor experience. The NWP also received a congressionally directed grant for an additional \$1 million through the Institute of Museum and Library Services. In addition to funding improvements to the house and its museum exhibits, the

²¹⁰ Email from Susan Carter to Patti Kuhn Babin, 23 September, 2020.

grants also allowed the NWP to hire additional staff.²¹¹ The house closed in the spring of 2010 for renovation.²¹²

As part of the improvements, the NWP was able to add a stairway, handicapped accessible lift, and a ramp on the northeast corner of the property, located on the adjoining Capitol Grounds property. A licensing agreement permitted the use of the adjoining property by the National Woman's Party in perpetuity, approved by the Architect of the Capitol in September 2010.²¹³

The availability of future federal funding came into question in 2012-2013 when appropriations for the house more than exceeded the cap of \$2 million set in 1988 (Public Law 100-355 - June 28, 1988). Consequently, the NPS was no longer authorized to provide any additional funding assistance to the NWP, a loss of almost \$100,000 annually.²¹⁴ The NWP's fundraising efforts alone were not enough to cover the cost of maintaining the house and its collection. Senator Kent Conrad (North Dakota), husband of NWP Board member Lucy Calautti, suggested a meeting with Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar, a long-time friend and Senate colleague. In addition to his wife, Conrad had close ties with the Sewall-Belmont House. As a young intern on Capitol Hill, Conrad lodged at the house and spent evenings in the garden listening to Alice Paul host events on current affairs with national and international guests. At the meeting with Secretary Salazar, Lucy Calautti, NWP President Diane Lipsey, and Sewall-Belmont House Executive Director Page Harrington, Salazar agreed to help. The Board invited Salazar to the next Alice Award luncheon.²¹⁵

Secretary Salazar attended the Alice Award luncheon at the Sewall-Belmont House in September 2012. After being briefed on the site's reduced capacity for providing visitor services and resource protection, Secretary Salazar raised the idea of designating the site as a full unit of the national park system. Secretary Salazar also recognized the site's significance in women's history in the United States and that the designation would support the objective of the NPS's Centennial initiative *A Call to Action*. In December 2012 Secretary Salazar sponsored a workshop entitled "Telling the Whole Story: Women and the Making of the United States," which was co-hosted by the NPS and the National Collaborative for Women's History Sites and held at the Sewall-Belmont House. The event kicked off a larger initiative on women's history that Salazar had

211 National Park Service, *Sewall-Belmont House Feasibility Study* (2015), 22-24.

212 Jacqueline Trescott, "2 Senators Snag Women's History Museum," *Washington Post*, 3 October 2013:R3.

213 National Park Service, *Sewall-Belmont House Feasibility Study* (2015), 9, 17.

214 National Park Service, *Sewall-Belmont House Feasibility Study* (2015), 1.

215 Email from Susan Carter to Patti Kuhn Babin, 23 September, 2020.

recently introduced called “Telling All Americans’ Stories.” At the workshop, participants discussed that making the Sewall-Belmont House a full NPS unit would fulfill two goals of the initiative: adding to the relatively few standalone NPS women’s history sites; and strengthening the overall interpretation of women’s history within the national park system.²¹⁶

In 2013, the NPS initiated a feasibility study to consider the potential of incorporating the Sewall-Belmont house as a full unit of the national park system. The study determined that without an increase in the legislated federal funding cap, the Sewall-Belmont House would be “forced to operate with complete dependence on fundraising and other nonfederal funding sources. Under this scenario, it is likely that in the near future the site will be closed to the public and fall into further disrepair. Such a scenario could allow limited private tours and library visits to continue; however, Sewall-Belmont House’s legislated intent as a national historic site to preserve the house for the ‘benefit and inspiration’ of the public would be seriously compromised.” The study also noted that the NWP continued to suffer from lack of membership and had experienced a sharp decline between 2010 and 2013. By 2013, the NWP had 140 members, a 60 percent decrease since 2010.²¹⁷

In 2014, the National Woman’s Party discovered mold in the library’s HVAC system. Executive Director Page Harrington needed to find \$90,000 to remediate the mold issues. Consequently, the organization was forced to make several of its staff positions part time. Despite the relief provided by previous federal funding and grants, the upkeep and maintenance of the 200-year-old house continued to be a burden on the NWP, even more so after the exhaustion of the federal grants. Harrington stated in 2016, “When winter comes, I’m terrified of a cracked pipe in the basement.” In spite of the situation, Harrington stated, “we will fight tooth and nail before we go quietly into the night.”²¹⁸

It was soon apparent that passing legislation to incorporate the site into the national park system could take years, time the NWP didn’t have. The Board invited Senator Barbara Mikulski (Maryland), long renowned for her leadership on behalf of women, to be the 2014 recipient of the Alice Award. Seated next to Senator Mikulski at the event, Lucy Calautti explained the time sensitivity in saving the Sewall-Belmont House. According to Calautti, Senator Mikulski said, “Lucy, this is a job for the women of the Senate. The women will get this done.”

216 National Park Service, *Sewall-Belmont House Feasibility Study* (2015), 1.

217 National Park Service, *Sewall-Belmont House Feasibility Study* (2015), 50.

218 John Kelly, “Women’s Suffrage is secure, but its D.C. Museum is in a Bind,” *Washington Post*, 10 March 2015:B3.

Mikulski proposed the idea to simultaneously introduce legislation and ask President Barack Obama to use his powers under the Antiquities Act to designate the Sewall-Belmont House as a national monument. The timing was crucial. President Obama's second term was coming to an end and a new administration might not be as committed.²¹⁹

In 2015, Senators Barbara Mikulski and Shelley Moore Capito (West Virginia) introduced the Sewall-Belmont House Act (S. 1975) to "establish the Sewall-Belmont House National Historic Site as a unit of the National Park System (NPS)." Mikulski also wrote to President Barack Obama asking that he use his presidential power to proclaim the Sewall-Belmont House a monument. Mikulski later stated, "There are a lot of monuments around here in Washington, and we thought that there ought to be a national monument to women — to our struggle and our success." More than two-thirds of women senators supported the bipartisan bill, but as of April 2016, the bill had not passed.²²⁰

219 Email from Susan Carter to Patti Kuhn Babin, 23 September, 2020.

220 Page Harrington, "Let's Celebrate Women on the Mall," *Washington Post*, 7 April 2016; "Sewall-Belmont House, a Center of the Women's Equality Movement, Becomes a National Monument," *New York Times*, 12 April 2016.



CHAPTER 4

THE BELMONT-PAUL WOMEN'S EQUALITY NATIONAL MONUMENT

2016-2020

Chapter title page: Photograph of the stained glass fanlight over the front door of the Sewall-Belmont House (National Park Service).

CHAPTER 4: THE BELMONT-PAUL WOMEN'S EQUALITY NATIONAL MONUMENT, 2016-2020

On April 12, 2016, President Barack Obama used his executive powers under the Antiquities Act to designate the Sewall-Belmont House as the Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument. Subsequently, the National Woman's Party donated the house and 0.34 acres to the National Park Service.¹ President Obama made the announcement of Presidential Proclamation 9423, which established the monument, on Equal Pay Day, an annual observance that symbolizes how far into the year women must work to earn what men earned the year before.²

At its dedication, President Obama emphasized the importance of the site for future generations:

I want young girls and boys to come here, 10, 20, 100 years from now, to know that women fought for equality, it was not just given to them. I want them to come here and be astonished that there was ever a time when women could not vote. I want them to be astonished that there was ever a time when women earned less than men for doing the same work. I want them to be astonished

1 National Park Service, Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument, Foundation Document, 34-36.

2 "Sewall-Belmont House, a Center of the Women's Equality Movement, Becomes a National Monument," *New York Times*, 12 April 2016.



Figure 4-1. President Barack Obama and Page Harrington, Executive Director of the Sewall-Belmont House and Museum, view artifacts at the Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument in Washington, DC, April 12, 2016 (Official White House Photo by Pete Souza).

that there was ever a time when women were vastly outnumbered in the boardroom or in Congress, that there was ever a time when a woman had never sat in the Oval Office.”³

Executive Director Page Harrington told the *New York Times* that the house's name will remain the same: “It will always be the Sewall-Belmont House — that will never go away, and we don't want to get rid of that history. But if you're talking about a women's history monument, you want to pick women to name it for.”⁴

Coinciding with the establishment of the national monument, businessman and philanthropist David M. Rubenstein donated \$1 million to the National Park Foundation to fund critical repairs and restoration of the newest national park site. Presented during the NPS's Centennial year, the donation helped ensure the proper protection and care of the National Woman's Party's collection, stored in the library, as well as provided much-needed repairs to the house's HVAC system, chimney, roof, gutters, and windows.⁵

With the funds provided by Rubenstein and the National Park Foundation, the NPS began a two-phase rehabilitation project on the property in 2017. The project included improvements to the exterior building envelope; structural issues of the roof and floor systems; masonry aspects of the chimneys and fireplaces; mechanical work reviewing the entire system and replacement of the HVAC system; design of a fire suppression system for the library; access to the existing exterior fire egress stairs; deferred maintenance; and system replacement needs.⁶ Most visible was the restoration of the iconic stained-glass fanlight above the front door of the house, which was in great need of repair. Phase 1 occurred in 2018 and focused on building restoration. Phase 2 is projected to begin in 2021.⁷

With the establishment of the national monument, the partnership between the NPS and the NWP changed. The new partnership provided for cooperative interpretation and management activities at the site. The NWP continued to embody the history and significance of the site and serve as the steward of the

3 President Obama's dedication of the Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument, April 12, 2016.

4 “Sewall-Belmont House, a Center of the Women's Equality Movement, Becomes a National Monument,” *New York Times*, 12 April 2016.

5 National Park Foundation, “David Rubenstein Donates \$1 Million to National Park Foundation to Repair and Restore Newly Designated Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument,” 12 April 2016, accessed at <https://www.nationalparks.org/about-foundation/newsroom/david-rubenstein-donates-1-million-national-park-foundation-repair-and>.

6 National Park Service and Alpha Corporation, *Rehabilitate Belmont-Paul Monument, Schematic Design Narrative*, 2017.

7 Jeffrey Jones, NAMA, personal communication with QE, January 2020.

party’s collections while the NPS provided technical assistance and overall management of the physical site. In 2016 the NWP and the NPS signed a general agreement to formalize the partnership and outline the roles and responsibilities between the two organizations. The NWP and NPS continued to collaborate on developing educational and outreach programs about the women’s suffrage and equal rights movements.⁸ Under the agreement, the NWP maintained its administrative offices in the house, but relocated them to the basement. The NPS moved its administrative offices and functions to the third floor.

With its public-private partnership, the NWP and the NPS together tell the story of the ongoing struggle for women’s social, political, and economic equality. The NPS manages the Belmont-Paul Women’s Equality National Monument as part of the National Mall and Memorial Parks administrative unit of the NPS and provides tours of the house free to the public Wednesday through Sunday. The NPS’s purpose statement for the national monument is “to preserve and interpret the historic headquarters and story of the courageous activism of the National Woman’s Party and the community of women committed to political, social, and economic equality, in order to inspire and engage current and future generations.”⁹ Following this purpose, the NPS has initiated new studies to help with the interpretation and management of the site, including a Cultural Landscape Report, started in the fall of 2019, concurrent with this Historic Resource Study.

8 National Park Service, Foundation Document, 9.

9 National Park Service, Foundation Document, 9; National Park Service, “Belmont-Paul Women’s Equality National Monument,” accessed 8 September 2020 at <https://www.nps.gov/bepa/index.htm>.

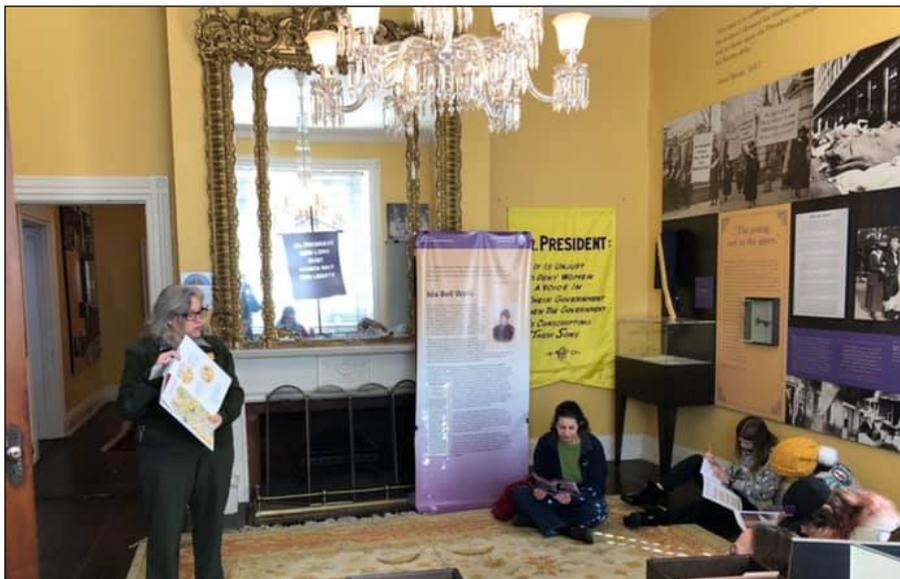


Figure 4-2. Ranger Susan Philpott at the Belmont-Paul Women’s Equality National Monument tells the story of Saxon, the suffrage cat who travelled the country with suffragists to get the word out about Votes for Women (National Park Service).

After the establishment of the national monument, the NWP once again reformed its primary mission and goals. No longer burdened with the upkeep and maintenance of the house, the NWP recommitted itself to the fight for full equality of all women. The NWP continued to educate the public about the women's rights movement, using the historic feminist library and suffragist and ERA archives "to tell the inspiring story of a century of courageous activism by American women." The NWP also renewed its efforts to promote the passage and ratification of the ERA as a critically important next step toward women's equality, particularly with the centennial of the ratification of the 19th Amendment in 2020.¹⁰

The NWP also came to terms with its past. On its website, the NWP wrote:

We take great inspiration from our founders and their impact on women's equality, yet we recognize that there are unacceptable parts of our history that we cannot ignore if we hope to move forward together. The National Woman's Party and the larger feminist movement of the last two centuries have a legacy of racism and classism that we must acknowledge, confront, and correct. As part of our new vision, we are committed to empowering a movement that is inclusive and that values voices that have long been ignored and marginalized. Our coalition of allies, stakeholders and partners, is representative of the people in this fight for equality and respects everyone who is working to create a world in which full equality for all women is a reality.¹¹

The NWP endeavored to recruit Black women to its Board of Directors, with mixed success. In order to further confront its diversity challenges and continue its tradition to use the house and garden to host activities and gain membership, the NWP promoted several new outreach events after the establishment of the national monument. One of the most popular was the evening Equality Salons, held to foster discussion on contemporary issues of importance to women's equality and diversity. In addition, the NWP held Book Talks, which included discussions and book signings by women authors, and happy hours to draw new members to the house. With its focus on attracting new members through engaging public programs and its emphasis on the preservation of the collection, the NWP experienced a surge in membership and fundraising efforts to support the educational activities of the NWP increased.¹²

On August 26, 2018, the National Woman's Party marked Women's Equality Day by hosting U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg at the Sewall-Belmont House. The event, which also included other leaders in the women's

10 National Woman's Party, "How Our Past Informs Our Present," accessed 27 April 2020 at <https://www.nationalwomansparty.org/mission-1>.

11 National Woman's Party, "How Our Past Informs Our Present," accessed 27 April 2020 at <https://www.nationalwomansparty.org/mission-1>.

12 National Park Service, Foundation Document, 17.



Figure 4-3. U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg at the 2018 Equality Day Event at the Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument (National Woman's Party).

rights movement, included a conversation on why the Equal Rights Amendment “is still critically important; inclusion; internationality; and diversity in today’s equal rights movement; and the past, the present and the potential of the future of the movement.” At the event, Justice Ginsburg explained,

Every constitution in the world written since the year 1950 has a provision that men and women are persons of equal citizenship stature. Our Constitution should have explicitly such a provision. . . If I take out this pocket Constitution and show it to my granddaughters, I can’t point to a provision that says explicitly men and women have equal rights and obligations under the law. I would like to be able to.¹³

With the approaching 100th anniversary of women’s suffrage in 2020, the NWP vowed to renew its work to achieve full constitutional equality for women. Zakiya Thomas, Executive Director of the NWP, stated the organization’s commitment to “achieve full constitutional equality for women. We will harness our past to inform and advance the modern effort for women’s rights in this critical moment of civic engagement among women as seen in today’s Resistance, #MeToo, and #TimesUp movements.”¹⁴

Despite the NWP’s fundraising efforts, the generosity of the Board, the success of its events, and the talent of the NWP staff, the NWP’s financial

13 National Woman’s Party, Press Release, Justice Ginsburg & Women’s Rights Leaders Discuss the Path Forward,” 29 August 2018, accessed 25 September 2020 at <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b35771bf93fd4a17451f69e/t/5b897032b8a045a9a7d81ed9/1535733811853/NWP+Press+Release+8.29.18.pdf>.

14 National Woman’s Party, Press Release, Justice Ginsburg & Women’s Rights Leaders Discuss the Path Forward,” 29 August 2018, accessed 25 September 2020 at <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b35771bf93fd4a17451f69e/t/5b897032b8a045a9a7d81ed9/1535733811853/NWP+Press+Release+8.29.18.pdf>.

struggles continued. Funds raised were not enough to support even a small staff, programming, and the expenses of the organization. The situation was exacerbated by the late 2018 stock market crash and a decline in charitable donations; the government shutdown in early 2019, which resulted in the cancellation of a planned fundraiser during that period; and an overall trend of giving toward political campaigns and organizations since the 2016 election. The resulting financial shortfall caused the NWP to drastically reduce staff and expenses and ended its ability to conduct programming.¹⁵

With these funding limitations, the NWP's focus once again shifted to sharing and preserving the NWP's collection. During the 2020 centennial of the 19th Amendment, the NWP loaned significant pieces of its collection to museums around the country, including the National Archives, Library of Congress, National Portrait Gallery, Brandywine River Museum of Art, and the Virginia Capitol Visitor's Center. NWP staff also created two traveling exhibits, one of which celebrates the life and work of the NWP's cartoonist Nina Allender. The other, entitled "Standing Together: Women's Ongoing Fight for Equality," links the NWP's fight for suffrage and equality begun 100 years ago to the ongoing fight for the ERA and equality today. These exhibits were in or slated for multiple locations across the country when the Coronavirus pandemic of 2020 caused museums across the country to close their doors to visitors.¹⁶

In 2019 the NWP Board of Directors and all voting NWP members unanimously approved the transfer of the remainder of the party's permanent collection to the National Park Service and the Library of Congress. The NWP first donated parts of its collection to the Library of Congress in 1941. The party made a second donation to the library in 1979, after Alice Paul's death.¹⁷ The final transfer, which was officially announced in October 2020, will ensure that the NWP's important collection is cared for and available to the public in perpetuity and shared far more broadly than the NWP has the resources to do.¹⁸ In response to the transfer, Susan Carter, president of the Board of Directors of the NWP, stated,

The National Woman's Party was in the vanguard of the women's suffrage and equal rights movements, and we are honored to gift this treasured collection to the American public so that the hard-fought battles for women's rights are

15 Email from Susan Carter to Patti Kuhn Babin, 23 September, 2020.

16 Email from Susan Carter to Patti Kuhn Babin, 23 September, 2020.

17 Library of Congress, *National Woman's Party Records, A Finding Aid to the to the Collection in the Library of Congress* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2003, revised 2012); Notice of Hearing, Transfer of Permanent Collection Notice is hereby given of a public hearing, accessed 10 September 2020 at <https://mddcnews.com/public-notices/notice-of-hearing-transfer-of-permanent-collection-notice-is-hereby-given-of-a-public-hearing>.

18 Email from Susan Carter to Patti Kuhn Babin, 23 September, 2020.

not forgotten. Our goal is to ensure the NWP's history is preserved and made widely available for posterity, an effort that began with designation of our headquarters as a National Monument in 2016. We are grateful to the Library of Congress and National Park Service for their commitment to preserving and sharing this iconic history.¹⁹

At the end of 2020, the National Woman's Party secured its future by dissolving as an independent nonprofit and joining with the Alice Paul Institute (API), a nonprofit organization founded in 1984 and based in Mount Laurel, New Jersey, at Alice Paul's birthplace, Paulsdale. Both organizations are connected through the legacy of Alice Paul and "share a dedication to the preservation and celebration of the history of women's suffrage, and the continued fight for constitutionally protected equal rights for all." In response to the move, NWP President Susan Carter stated,

We are excited to join with the Alice Paul Institute to strengthen our common education efforts under the API banner, while ensuring the NWP's name will remain in use to inspire current and future activists for equality. This move reflects our strategic goal of preserving the NWP's history and legacy, which began with designation of our headquarters as a National Monument in 2016, and the recent gift of our iconic collection to the Library of Congress and the National Park Service, long-time collaborators in preserving and sharing our history.²⁰

Following the joining of the organizations, the NWP assigned its trademark rights and other uses of the National Woman's Party name to the API to brand future programs and initiatives that carry on the NWP mission. Additionally, the API Board of Directors welcomed three members of the NWP's board leadership with the goal of forming a future committee to advise on the potential expansion of programs to the Washington, DC, area and nationally. As expressed by Lucienne Beard, API's Executive Director,

Alice Paul made a decisive statement about her commitment to equality when she founded the National Woman's Party more than 100 years ago. Blending together the two organizations that have carried her work into the next century is a new statement of that commitment. In 2020 we have celebrated 100 years of the right to vote, while acknowledging that not all Americans have been able to equally exercise that right. Clearly, there is more work to do to achieve Alice Paul's goal of "ordinary equality" for all. Together, as one organization with a unified mission, we carry on with that work.²¹

19 "Library of Congress and National Park Service Receive Historic Collection on Women's Rights from National Woman's Party," 8 October 2020 at <https://www.loc.gov/item/prn-20-066/library-of-congress-and-national-park-service-receive-historic-collection-on-womens-rights-from-national-womans-party/2020-10-08/>.

20 Alice Paul Institute and National Woman's Party, "Alice Paul Institute Receives National Woman's Party Trademarks," News Release, 29 December 2020.

21 Alice Paul Institute and National Woman's Party, "Alice Paul Institute Receives National Woman's Party Trademarks," News Release, 29 December 2020.

CONCLUSION

Almost 100 years after Alice Paul and the NWP introduced the Equal Rights Amendment, the fight for its ratification continues. Supporters of the ERA continue to see its relevance in ending discrimination in the workplace, helping women achieve pay equality, requiring states to intervene in cases of domestic violence and sexual harassment, and even bolstering protections for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer people. Although opponents continue to argue that the ERA is unnecessary because the 14th Amendment guarantees everyone the “equal protection of the laws,” supporters of the ERA recognize that there are still gaps in existing laws at both the federal and state level and that the ERA would address these comprehensively. In 2017 Nevada state Senator Pat Spearman persuaded the state legislature to ratify the ERA, even though the 1982 deadline had long passed. The move revived interest in the ERA across the country and in 2018 Illinois became the 37th state to approve the amendment. In January 2020 Virginia ratified the ERA, becoming the 38th state to approve the ERA.²²

With Virginia’s ratification, the ERA reached the three quarter assent required. However, since 1982 five states voted to rescind their ratifications.²³ On February 13, 2020, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a joint resolution to remove the original time limit assigned to the Equal Rights Amendment. The support of the Senate is still needed. New organizations, such as the ERA Coalition, have taken over the role of the National Woman’s Party in the fight for the passage of the ERA, yet it is the NWP’s vision and relentless actions that have kept the ERA alive since 1923.

The year 2020 marked the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment, bringing renewed attention to the role of Alice Paul and the NWP. Museums across the country participated in the celebration with exhibits about the history of the suffrage movement as well as the status of women’s rights today. The joining of the National Woman’s Party and the Alice Paul Institute in the centennial year secured the future and legacy of the National Woman’s Party. Both the API and the Belmont-Paul Women’s Equality National Monument continue to tell the important story of Alice Paul and the National Woman’s Party’s role in the fight for equality.

22 “Why the Equal Rights Amendment is Back,” *New York Times*, 15 January 2020.

23 “Why the Equal Rights Amendment is Back,” *New York Times*, 15 January 2020.



CHAPTER 5

RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter title page: Photograph of the Sewall-Belmont House at 144 Constitution Avenue NE (QE 2019).

CHAPTER 5: RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made with the intention of identifying future projects and topics for additional studies at the Belmont-Paul Women’s Equality National Monument.

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK AND NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

An update to the Sewall-Bemont House National Historic Landmark and National Register nominations to current standards is recommended. The updated nomination would include the existing condition of the Sewall-Belmont House and its landscape and update the statement of significance and period of significance of the property.

The Belmont-Paul Women’s Equality National Monument, historically known as the Alva Belmont House, and later the Sewall-Belmont House, has been evaluated for significance in multiple documents, including a National Register of Historic Places nomination (1972) and a National Historic Landmark nomination (1974). Public Law 93-486, signed by President Gerald Ford on October 26, 1974, officially designated the Sewall-Belmont House a National Historic Site and authorized a cooperative agreement between the National Woman’s Party and the Secretary of the Interior for the preservation and interpretation of the house. In 2016, President Barack Obama designated the property the Belmont-Paul Women’s Equality National Monument and it became a unit of the national park system.

The 1972 National Register form does not specify the applicable National Register criteria under which it is significant; however, the assumption is that the property was listed under Criterion A, in the area of politics, and Criterion C, in the area of architecture. The nomination form indicates that the property was locally significant for its contribution to the “cultural heritage and visual beauty of the District of Columbia.”¹ The Cultural Landscape Report, completed concurrently with this Historic Resource Study, clarifies the property’s significance and

1 Suzanne Ganschinietz, *Sewall-Belmont House National Register Nomination*, 3.

National Register criteria, areas and levels of significance, and the period of significance.

The following Significance Summary was taken from the Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument Cultural Landscape Report.

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

The Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument is nationally significant under National Register Criterion A in the area of politics as the headquarters of the National Woman's Party (NWP) since 1929 and nationally significant under Criterion B for its association with Alice Paul and her contributions in politics as the founder of the NWP. In addition, the house is locally significant under Criterion C, architecture, as a 19th century building that illustrates the evolution of architectural styles in the city of Washington.

Led by visionary Alice Paul, the NWP played a ground breaking role in securing the passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment and women's constitutional right to vote in 1919 and 1920, respectively. After the NWP acquired the property at 144 Constitution Avenue NE as its headquarters in 1929, five years after Alice Paul introduced the Equal Rights Amendment, the property served as a staging ground for Alice Paul and members of the NWP to draft more than 600 pieces of legislation in support of equal rights and to advocate for women's political, social, and economic equality, both in the United States and abroad. In 1943 Alice Paul wrote new language from the NWP's headquarters for the Equal Rights Amendment and lobbied Congress extensively for its passage until her retirement in 1972. As the NWP's headquarters for over 90 years, the Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument "serves as the physical manifestation of the women's equality movement."² Built by Robert Sewall in 1799-1800, the Sewall-Belmont House at 144 Constitution Avenue was extensively damaged or destroyed in 1814 during the War of 1812 and subsequently rebuilt between 1814 and 1820. It was later remodeled in 1881, 1922-1929, and in the 1930s. The various building periods illustrate the evolution of architectural styles in Washington, DC.

2 National Park Service, *Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument, Foundation Document*, 9; The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, "Presidential Proclamation – Establishment of the Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument," 12 April 2016, accessed at <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/04/12/presidential-proclamation-establishment-belmont-paul-womens-equality>; National Woman's Party, "Our Mission," accessed at <https://www.nationalwomensparty.org/mission-1>.

Criterion A, Politics - National Woman's Party

Established in 1916 by visionary suffragist Alice Paul, the National Woman's Party played a large role in the passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment and led the way for gaining equal rights for women both in the United States and internationally. With its innovative political strategies and tactics, the NWP became a blueprint for civil rights organizations throughout the twentieth century and beyond. As the NWP headquarters, the Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument "was created by women for women as an empowering tactical center and home from which to provide an active global form for women to learn, mentor, and express their civic voice."³

After the passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment in 1919-1920, the NWP reorganized and shifted its focus to the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). Between 1923 and 1972, the NWP's lobbying efforts resulted in the ERA being introduced in every session of Congress. To accomplish the passage of the ERA, Alice Paul and the NWP participated in numerous interviews with members of Congress, secured congressional endorsements through the distribution of candidate pledge cards; received Presidential support; sponsored radio broadcasts; formed ad hoc legislative and congressional committees; testified at hearings before the House and Senate judiciary committees, and lobbied against opposition tactics to minimize the effectiveness of the amendment among other efforts.⁴

In addition to the ERA, the NWP fought for the legal, social, and economic status of women, both in the United States and around the world. During the 1920s and 1930s, the NWP broadened women's rights on the state and local levels and from its headquarters drafted over 600 pieces of legislation aimed at equal rights for women including custody rights of children, jury service, property rights, divorce rights, estate administration, guardianship rights, and civil liability.⁵ These efforts resulted in over 300 legislative changes and included the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 and the Civil Rights Act of 1964.⁶

Not long after the NWP dedicated its new headquarters at First Street NE, known as the "Old Brick Capitol," in 1922, the federal government threatened the property with condemnation for the construction of the United States Supreme Court Building. With the help of prominent suffragist, president of the NWP, and

3 National Park Service, Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument, Foundation Document, 7.

4 Thomas C. Pardo, ed., *The National Woman's Party Papers*, 2.

5 Pardo, *The National Woman's Party Papers*, 2.

6 National Park Service, *Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument*, Foundation Document, 7.

benefactor Alva Belmont, the NWP purchased the brick house on the corner of Constitution Avenue and Second Street NE in 1929 from Senator Porter Dale to serve as its headquarters. Belmont said of the new headquarters, “may it stand for years and years to come, telling of the work that the women of the United States have accomplished; the example we have given foreign nations; and our determination that they shall be—as ourselves—free citizens, recognized as the equals of men.” Named the “Alva Belmont House” and later known as the Sewall-Belmont House, the property became the staging ground for the NWP’s advocacy for the Equal Rights Amendment and other significant domestic and international action for women’s equality.⁷

The NWP’s headquarters at the Belmont House quickly became the nucleus for all of the NWP’s national activities in Washington, including the location for meetings of the NWP’s national council. It also became a place where the NWP could recruit new members and for women to gather. Following Paul’s mantra of holding the party in power responsible, its location on Capitol Hill near the House and Senate buildings made it ideal for the organization’s lobbying efforts. The property was not only the NWP’s headquarters and the center of its political activism, but also served as a feminist gathering place and community for women. As expressed by Leila J. Rupp in “The Women’s Community in the National Woman’s Party, 1945 to the 1960s,” the Belmont House “created a female world for members of the Woman’s Party when they came to Washington and served as a feminist space for all women who identified with the women’s movement.”⁸ Similar to its former headquarters at the Old Brick Capitol, the Belmont House served as a hotel for members and women visiting Washington and during nice weather, guests had their meals in the garden.⁹ Gardens played a large role in the use and activities of all of the NWP’s headquarters, and the garden at the Belmont House was no exception. The garden served as a place for members to gather, hold meetings, and welcome guests. The NWP also welcomed federal employees who worked nearby, including members of Congress and their staff, to enjoy the house’s garden.¹⁰

The House and Senate passed the ERA in 1971 and 1972, respectively. Yet in 1982 the deadline for ratification expired with only three additional states needed

7 The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, “Presidential Proclamation – Establishment of the Belmont-Paul Women’s Equality National Monument,” 12 April 2016, accessed at <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/04/12/presidential-proclamation-establishment-belmont-paul-womens-equality>.

8 Leila J. Rupp, “The Women’s Community in the National Woman’s Party, 1945 to the 1960s,” 727.

9 “Come to Washington Headquarters,” *Equal Rights*, 5 August 1933.

10 “The Alva Belmont House in Summer,” *Equal Rights*, 5 August 1933.

for passage. In 1972, Alice Paul retired from the NWP. Threats to the house by the construction of the Hart Senate Office Building in the late 1950s and 1960s led to the NWP headquarters being listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1972 and its designation as a National Historic Landmark in 1974. In October 1974 Congress enacted PL 93-486, which designated the property a National Historic Site and authorized the Secretary of the Interior to enter into a cooperative agreement with the NWP for the property's restoration and maintenance. Dwindling membership and funds for the upkeep of the house forced the NWP to establish the Woman's Party Corporation in 1977 as a means to protect its endowment, accept funds from the Department of Interior, and finance its educational activities.

In 1997, the NWP ceased as lobbying organization and became a non-profit, educational organization that focused on telling the story of the NWP, the importance of the suffrage and equal rights movements, and advocate for women's political, social, and economic equality. In 2016 the NWP donated the property to the National Park Service and President Barack Obama designated the site as the Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument and part of the national park system through Presidential Proclamation 9423. Since 2017 the NPS has continued to tell the story of the courageous activism by American women through public interpretation and education at the property.¹¹

Criterion B, Alice Paul - Politics

Alice Paul (1885-1977), founder of the NWP, "was the most significant figure in the final phase of the struggle for a Constitutional amendment granting [American] women the right to vote."¹² Born in 1885 to Quaker parents in Mount Laurel, New Jersey, Paul was well educated, with an undergraduate degree from Swarthmore College and a Master of Arts degree in sociology from the University of Pennsylvania in 1907. While in England to study social work from 1907 to 1910, Paul joined the British suffrage movement with Emmeline Pankhurst, Pankhurst's daughters, and other women to secure the vote for British women. During her time in England, Paul participated in meetings, demonstrations, and depositions to Parliament that led to multiple arrests, hunger strikes, and force feedings and inspired her later work in the United States.

11 The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, "Presidential Proclamation – Establishment of the Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument," 12 April 2016, accessed at <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/04/12/presidential-proclamation-establishment-belmont-paul-womens-equality>.

12 National Historic Landmark File, Sewall-Belmont House, National Archives and Records Administration, accessed at <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/117691869>.

After returning to the United States and earning her PhD in sociology in 1912 from the University of Pennsylvania, Paul dedicated her life to women's suffrage. She became a member of the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) and by 1912 served as the chair of its Congressional Committee in Washington, DC. Along with fellow suffragist Lucy Burns, Paul created the Congressional Union of Woman's Suffrage. Paul's and Burn's belief that the suffrage movement needed to concentrate on the passage of a federal suffrage amendment and not state-by-state amendments led to a disagreement with the NAWSA on tactics. In 1914, the Congressional Union broke ties with the NAWSA and evolved into the NWP by 1916.

Paul's strategy, adopted from her experience in Britain, was to hold the party in power responsible. On March 3, 1913, the day before President Woodrow Wilson's inauguration, Paul organized a women's suffrage parade down Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, DC, with over 5,000 participants. Beginning in 1917, the NWP organized a series of nonviolent protests to demand President Wilson and Congress address women's suffrage. The NWP organized daily pickets in the form of "Silent Sentinels," women who stood outside the White House with banners displaying incendiary phrases directed at President Wilson. Many of these women, including Alice Paul, were attacked, arrested, and endured brutal prison conditions and force feedings. Newspaper headlines of Paul's and other NWP members' treatment garnered public sympathy and support for women's suffrage and by 1918, Wilson announced his support.¹³ The House approved the 19th Amendment on May 21, 1919, and the Senate followed two weeks later on June 4, 1919. On August 18, 1920, Tennessee became the 36th state to ratify the amendment, the final state needed for ratification.

After the passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment, Alice Paul reorganized the NWP and worked tirelessly for women's rights, both in the United States and internationally. To help in her quest, Paul received three law degrees from American University in the 1920s, including a PhD in civil law. On the 75th anniversary of the Seneca Falls Convention in 1923, she announced the Equal Rights Amendment, a constitutional amendment authored by Paul that stated

13 The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, "Presidential Proclamation – Establishment of the Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument," 12 April 2016, accessed at <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/04/12/presidential-proclamation-establishment-belmont-paul-womens-equality>; National Woman's Party, "Our Mission," accessed at <https://www.nationalwomansparty.org/mission-1>; Debra Michals, ed., "Alice Paul," National Women's History Museum, accessed at <https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/alice-paul>.

“Men and women shall have equal rights throughout the United States and every place subject to its jurisdiction.”¹⁴

In 1938, Alice Paul formed the World Woman’s Party, headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, which served as the National Woman’s Party’s international office for the promotion of equal rights for women around the world. As part of the World Woman’s Party, Alice Paul lobbied for the inclusion of equality provisions in the United Nations Charter and helped establish the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. After returning to the United States in 1941, Paul continued her work in American women’s issues and in 1943 rewrote the ERA, which then became known as the “Alice Paul Amendment.” Through the efforts of Paul and the NWP, the ERA was introduced in every session of Congress from 1923 until its passage in 1972.¹⁵

Paul remained dedicated to fighting for women’s equality for the rest of her life and was instrumental in getting a sexual discrimination clause to Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. She was “honorary chairman” of the NWP from its headquarters at the Alva Belmont House from at least 1968 until 1972, when she retired to her cabin in Connecticut. Until she suffered a stroke in 1974, Paul continued to campaign for the Equal Rights Amendment and its ratification, which still has not occurred. Alice Paul died in 1977 at the age of 92. Paul once stated, “I never doubted that equal rights was the right direction. Most reforms, most problems are complicated. But to me there is nothing complicated about ordinary equality.”¹⁶

Criterion C, Architecture

According to the 2001 Historic Structure Report, the Sewall-Belmont House is locally significant “for the evidence it provides of its physical evolution, rather than as an example of a particular style.” Originally constructed in 1799-1800, the house was extensively damaged or destroyed in 1814 during the War of 1812 and subsequently rebuilt between 1814 and 1820. It was later remodeled in 1881, 1922-1929, and in the 1930s. The building as it stands today incorporates elements from most or all of these periods. As stated in the HSR, “Stylistically, most of these renovations, particularly in the early 20th century, have attempted to imitate the character and workmanship of the 19th century building, and the changes made

14 Alice Paul Institute, “Alice Paul: Feminist, Suffragist, and Political Strategist,” accessed at <https://www.alicepaul.org/who-was-alice-paul/>.

15 Alice Paul Institute, “Alice Paul: Feminist, Suffragist, and Political Strategist,” accessed at <https://www.alicepaul.org/who-was-alice-paul/>.

16 National Park Service, *Belmont-Paul Women’s Equality National Monument, Foundation Document*, 5; Alice Paul Institute, “Alice Paul: Feminist, Suffragist, and Political Strategist,” accessed at <https://www.alicepaul.org/who-was-alice-paul/>.

during the various building periods testify not only to the changing tastes of the owners, but to the evolution of architectural styles in the city of Washington.”¹⁷ The house is a contributing building within the Capitol Hill Historic District.¹⁸

Period of Significance

The recommended period of significance for the Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument under Criteria A and B is 1929 to 1972. The period of significance begins in 1929, when the National Woman's Party purchased the property at 144 Constitution Avenue NE as their headquarters. The Period of Significance ends in 1972, which marks the year of Alice Paul's retirement from the National Woman's Party, when the Senate and the House passed the Equal Rights Amendment, and the year that the Belmont House was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. In the following years, the National Woman's Party began to shift its focus. In 1974, the Belmont House became a National Historic Landmark and Historic Site, and the NWP signed a cooperative agreement with the National Park Service. This change prompted the creation of a separate entity to receive funds from the National Park Service for the restoration of the house and the eventual creation of the Woman's Party Corporation in 1977.

The Historic Structure Report for the Sewall-Belmont House identified a period of significance from 1799 to 1943 for the house's local architectural significance under Criterion C. This period of significance extends from the initial construction of the house in 1799-1800 to the completion of the Florence Bayard Hilles Feminist Library by the NWP in 1943. According to the HSR, “While the majority of the existing building is believed to have been constructed between 1814 and 1820, any foundations or archeological evidence that may remain from the first (1799-1800) construction period would contribute to the understanding of the property and its significance.” The date of 1943 as the end of the period of significance represents the last historically significant alteration made to the building.¹⁹

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

During the research phase of this Historic Resource Study the outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic resulted in the temporary closure of many research institutions, including the Library of Congress, which houses the

17 Ehrenkrantz Echstut & Kuhn Architects et al, *The Sewall-Belmont House Historic Structure Report*, 1-2.

18 <https://planning.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/op/publication/attachments/Capitol%20Hill%20Historic%20District.pdf>; section 7, 5.

19 Ehrenkrantz Echstut & Kuhn Architects et al, *Sewall-Belmont House Historic Structure Report*, 1-2.

National Woman's Party collection. Consequently, the project team was not able to access correspondence and other NWP records to further the understanding of specific research questions. The project team identified the following research questions for future projects.

USE OF THE BELMONT HOUSE/NATIONAL WOMAN'S PARTY HEADQUARTERS

This study was not fully able to explore the early use of the Belmont House and the NWP's adjacent rowhouses on Second Street. While the general use of the buildings is included in previous reports and occasionally mentioned in *Equal Rights*, future research could look more closely at the National Woman's Party records to gain additional information on the use of the buildings and specific rooms.

MEMBERSHIP AND RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE NATIONAL WOMAN'S PARTY AND BLACK WOMEN

Several sources note the lack of diversity within the National Woman's Party membership as well as the tensions between NWP members and members of Black women's organizations, particularly Caryn E. Nueman's thesis "The Woman's Party and the ERA." Due to lack of access to the National Woman's Party records at the Library of Congress, this HRS was not able to review the correspondence cited and fully understand the views of the NWP and its members, particularly in the case of the civil rights movement. Future studies could explore this topic further.



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Section Cover photo: Alice Paul in front of NWP headquarters, celebrating the ratification of the 19th Amendment, 1920 (Library of Congress).

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WOMEN OF THE NATIONAL WOMAN'S PARTY

APPENDIX A

Table 3. National Chairmen of the National Woman's Party

YEARS	NAME
1913-1921	Alice Paul
1916	Anne Martin
1921-1925	Elsie M. Hill
1925-1927	Edith Houghton Hooker
1927-1929	Jane Norman Smith
1929-1932	Anna Kelton Wiley
1932-1933	Florence Bayard Hilles
1933-1934	Sarah T. Colvin
1934-1936	Florence Bayard Hilles
1936-1939	Sarah Thompson Pell
1939 (Aug-Nov)	Anna Kelton Wiley and Amy C. Ransome
1939-1942	Anna Kelton Wiley
1942-1945	Alice Paul
1945-1949	Anita Pollitzer
1949-1951	Agnes E. Wells
1951-1953	Ethel Ernest Murrell
1953-1954	Ernestine Breisch Powell
1954-1960	Amelia Himes Walker
1960-1964	Emma Guffey Miller
1965-1969	Mary Birckhead
1969-1971	Marjorie R. Longwell
1971-1975	Elizabeth Chittick

Table 4. Presidents of the National Woman's Party

YEARS	NAME
1921-1933	Alva Belmont
1965-1970	Emma Guffey Miller
1975-1989	Elizabeth Chittick
1989-1991	Mary Eastwood
1991-1994	Dorothy Ferrell-Gevinson
1994-1996	Helen Arnold
1996-1999	Dorothy Ferrell-Gevinson
1999-2005	Marty Langelan
2005-2009	Audrey Sheppard
2009-2015	Dianne Lipsey
2015-2016	Helen Chamberlin
2016-2017	Lucy Calautti
2017-2020	Susan Carter

Table 5. Executive Directors of the Sewall-Belmont House/National Woman's Party

YEARS	NAME
1996-1999	Paula Felt
1999-2001	Nancy Morrison
2001-2004	Angela Gilchrist
2004-2008	Amy Conroy
2008	Patricia Williams (Interim Executive Director)
2008-2017	Page Harrington
2017-2019	Jennifer Krafchik (Deputy Director)
2018-2019 (Aug-Jan)	Zakiya Thomas
2019-2020	Kirsten Hammerstrom (Collections Manager) ¹

¹ Kirsten Hammerstrom, collections manager, fulfilled the role of executive director while the position was vacant.

Table 6. Selected Biographies of Women of the National Woman’s Party

Last Name	Name	Dates	Biography	Source
Avery	Nina Horton Avery	1898-1980	Born in North Carolina, Nina Belle Horton Avery graduated from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in 1917 and moved to Richmond, Virginia, in 1920. After completing a business course at Massey Business College, she began a long career with Chesapeake and Ohio Railway Company and eventually became supervisor of contracts for the division of government relations. In 1953, Avery graduated from the Virginia School of Law in Richmond and was admitted to the bar four years later. Avery served as chairman of the NWP’s Joint Legislative Committee on Equal Rights and aided the NWP in its work to get sex provisions included in Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.	Find a Grave, “Nina Horton Avery,” accessed 2 October 2020 at https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/94160769/nina-belle-avery .
Belmont	Alva Belmont	1853-1933	Alva Erskine Smith Vanderbilt Belmont was a wealthy socialite and a committed suffragist. After initially supporting suffrage organizations focused on state voting rights like the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA), Belmont later joined the executive committee of the Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage (CU), which evolved to become the National Woman’s Party (NWP) in 1916. She played a significant role in the work of the NWP and provided funds to finance its ambitious campaigns. Belmont also used her social prominence to win both publicity and respect for the CU’s and NWP’s efforts. After the ratification of the 19th Amendment in 1920, Belmont continued to support the work of the NWP in the ongoing struggle for women’s equality. With Belmont’s generous patronage, the NWP was able to purchase a permanent headquarters on Capitol Hill, the Old Brick Capitol on First Street NE. After the federal government seized the building through eminent domain to build the Supreme Court, Belmont helped the NWP purchase its final headquarters at 144 B Street, NE (now Constitution Avenue) in 1929, dedicated the Alva Belmont House in 1931.	National Park Service, “Alva Belmont,” accessed 5 October 2020 at https://www.nps.gov/people/alva-belmont.htm .
Berger	Caruthers Berger	1917-1984	Mary Caruthers Gholson Berger was a feminist and attorney with the Office of the Solicitor, United States Department of Labor. Berger was active in the National Woman’s Party, the National Organization for Women, and a founder and board member of Human Rights for Women. Berger joined the NWP in 1959 and worked with Alice Paul on several issues including the ERA and Title VII of the Civil Rights Bill. In her work to support the passage of the sex discrimination amendment of Title VII of the Civil Rights Bill, Berger provided data and arguments for the NWP to submit to Congress. In 1966, she worked as a volunteer attorney on many of the early Title VII test cases in the United States appellate courts along with Sylvia Ellison, Mary Eastwood (also of the NWP), and Marguerite Rawalt. Berger authored several papers on sex discrimination in employment and women’s constitutional rights for both the NWP and NOW.	Barbara J. Love, ed., <i>Feminists Who Changed America, 1963-1975</i> (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 38.
Birckhead	Mary Birckhead	1891-1976	Mary Buchanan Birckhead (nee Albert) (1891-1976) was a Baltimore native and graduate of Bryn Mawr College. She served as NWP chairman from 1965 to 1969.	“Mrs. Mary Birckhead, 85, Services Set Tomorrow,” <i>Baltimore Sun</i> , 25 October 1976.
Boissevain	Inez Milholland Boissevain	1886-1916	Born to a wealthy family in Brooklyn, New York, Inez Millholland grew up living in New York City and London. While in England, Milholland met the militant suffragist Emmeline Pankhurst and became a political radical. After graduating from Vassar in 1909, Milholland started working as a suffrage orator in New York City and advocated for women’s labor rights. Milholland went on to earn a law degree from New York University in 1912. On March 3, 1913, Milholland achieved fame when she led the Woman Suffrage Procession in Washington, D.C. After the parade, she continued to work for women’s rights. Milholland gave numerous suffrage speeches in the United States and England. Although Milholland experienced poor health from pernicious anemia, she refused to stop her activism. In 1916, after starting a suffrage tour of the Western United States, she collapsed on October 22 while giving a speech in Los Angeles. Inez Milholland died a few weeks later at the age of thirty.	National Park Service, “Inez Milholland,” accessed 5 October 2020 at https://www.nps.gov/people/inez-milholland.htm .
Burns	Lucy Burns	1879-1966	Born in Brooklyn, New York, Lucy Burns graduated as a top student from Vassar College in 1902 and attended graduate school in Europe. While attending Oxford College, Burns encountered the women of the Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU), led by Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughters. Burns left her studies to join the WSPU. While participating in confrontational demonstrations demanding women’s right to vote, Burns was arrested several times and met Alice Paul in a London police station in 1909. After returning to the United States, Burns moved to Washington, DC, with Paul in 1912 to lead the Congressional Committee of the NAWSA. Along with Paul, Burns left NAWSA and established the independent organization the Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage in 1914, which became the National Woman’s Party in 1916. Burns served as the editor of <i>The Suffragist</i> and was one of the many NWP members who were arrested for picketing the White House in 1917. Burns was arrested six times for her participation in the White House pickets and led the prisoners on hunger strikes to protest their treatment. After the passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment in 1919-1920, Burns retired from public life and returned to Brooklyn.	National Park Service, Lucy Burns,” accessed 5 October 2020 at https://www.nps.gov/people/lucy-burns.htm .

Last Name	Name	Dates	Biography	Source
Chittick	Elizabeth Chittick	1908 – 2009	Born in Bangor, Pennsylvania, as Elizabeth Lancaster, Chittick attended business school in Easton, Pennsylvania. She took a civilian job with the US Navy at the Naval Air Station in Lakehurst, New Jersey, and later at the Banana River National Air Station in Florida. Following the end of World War II, Chittick left the Navy to attend Columbia University in New York. She married William Chittick, an electrical engineer, and eventually moved to the Philippines. After returning to the United States, Chittick studied to become a stockbroker and joined the firm Bache & Co. at a time when few women were working in the field. Chittick went back to school a few years later and eventually worked for the Internal Revenue Service in Washington, DC, as one of the agency's few female revenue officers. After joining the NWP in the 1960s, Chittick went on to serve as chairman of the NWP from 1971 to 1975, NWP President from 1975 to 1989, and WPC President from 1975 to 1991.	"Trailblazer in the Workplace Also Fought for Women's Rights," <i>The Palm Beach Post</i> , 27 December 2006:5.
Colvin	Sarah T. Colvin	1865-1949	Sarah Tarleton Colvin joined the Congressional Union in 1915 and started the Minnesota branch of the organization. She later served as the Minnesota state chairman of the NWP. Colvin participated in the "Woman Suffrage Special" nationwide tour of speakers in 1916. In 1918, Colvin was arrested while picketing the White House and participated in a hunger strike with other NWP members who were arrested. After the passage of the 19th Amendment, Colvin ceased her activism with the NWP, but later rejoined the group in 1933, when she once again became active in the Minnesota state branch. Colvin was NWP chairman from 1933 to 1934.	Suffrage Memorial, "Sarah Tarleton Colvin," accessed 10 October 2020 at https://suffragistmemorial.org/mrs-sarah-tarleton-colvin/ .
Gereau	Mary Condon Gereau	1916-2006	Mary Condon Gereau (1916-2006) was one of the first female lobbyists in Washington, DC, pushed for state and federal education legislation during her 40-year career, and championed the Equal Rights Amendment. Born in Iowa, Gereau received her bachelor's and Master's degrees from the University of Iowa. After serving as a program director with the American Red Cross during World War II, Gereau became an assistant professor of English and dean of men at Eastern Montana College. She was later elected Montana's state superintendent and served as a consultant to the US Senate Committee's subcommittee on Indian affairs. She served as president of the Equal Rights Ratification Council during the time when Congress was considering the ERA. She was vice president of the NWP from 1984 until 1991 and president of the Woman's Party Corporation from 1990 to 1996.	Yvonne Shinhoster Lamb, "Mary Gereau, 89; Lobbyist on Education, ERA," <i>Washington Post</i> , 2 Marc 2006:B06.
Hill	Elsie M. Hill	1883-1970	Elsie Mary Hill was the daughter of Congressman Ebenezer J. Hill of Connecticut. She was a graduate of Vassar College and taught French in a District of Columbia high school. Hill served as a member of the executive committee of the Congressional Union (1914-1915) and later was a national organizer for the NWP. In August 1918, Hill was sentenced to 15 days in District Jail for speaking at Lafayette Square. She served as NWP chairman from 1921 to 1925.	Library of Congress, "Elsie M. Hill," https://www.loc.gov/item/mnwp000399 .
Hilles	Florence Bayard Hilles	1865-1954	Florence Bayard Hilles was the daughter of Thomas Francis Bayard (1828-1898), the 30th US Secretary of State. Hilles was one of the founders of the NWP and was one of the many women sent to the Occoquan Workhouse for picketing the White House. Hilles later served as the NWP chairman from 1933 to 1936. In 1940, Hilles led the effort to establish a library in the Belmont House and in 1943, the NWP rededicated the library the Florence Bayard Hilles Library.	National Woman's Party, "Florence Bayard Hilles," accessed 2 October 2020 at https://nationalwomansparty.pastperfectonline.com/byperson?keyword=Hilles%2C+Florence+Bayard%2C+1865-1954 .
Hooker	Edith Houghton Hooker	1879-1948	Born in Buffalo, New York, Edith Houghton Hooker graduated from Bryn Mawr College and was one of the first women accepted to the Johns Hopkins Medical School. After marrying Donald Hooker and year of study in Berlin, Germany, Hooker returned to Baltimore, Maryland, and began a career in social work. Hooker was a leader in the Maryland suffrage movement and created the Maryland Suffrage News in 1912. In 1917, Hooker became the editor of <i>The Suffragist</i> , the official publication of the NWP.	Maryland Women's Hall of Fame, "Edith Houghton Hooker," accessed 2 October 2020 at https://msa.maryland.gov/msa/educ/exhibits/womenshall/html/hooker.html .
Longwell	Marjorie R. Longwell	1894-1979	Marjorie R. Longwell of California was a former state chairwoman of the California Branch of the NWP and served as secretary-treasurer of the Susan B. Anthony Memorial Committee of California. Longwell was NWP chairman from 1969-1971, a member of the NWP National Council from 1972-1974, and was honorary NWP president in 1975.	National Woman's Party, Marjorie R. Longwell, https://nationalwomansparty.pastperfectonline.com/byperson?keyword=Longwell%2C+Marjorie%2C+1894-1979 .
Lutz	Alma Lutz	1890-1973	Born in Jamestown, North Dakota, Alma Lutz was a leader in the women's suffrage movement and an author of several biographies of leading feminists. After graduating from Vassar College in 1912, Lutz returned to North Dakota to fight for women's suffrage. In 1918, Lutz moved to Boston where she wrote for the National Woman's Party. In 1938, Lutz served as editor of <i>The Suffragist</i> , the official publication of the NWP, and for many years was a member of the NWP's national council.	Vassar, "Guide to the Alma Lutz Papers," accessed 2 October 2020 at https://specialcollections.vassar.edu/collections/manuscripts/findingaids/lutz_alma.html#d0e51 .
Marks	Jeannette Marks	1875-1964	Born in Chattanooga, Tennessee, Jeannette Augustus Marks attended boarding schools in Europe and in the United States. She later attended Wellesley College, where in 1899 she met Mary Emma Woolley, a Wellesley professor, with whom she had a relationship that lasted 48 years. In 1900, Marks earned a Bachelor's degree and three years later she received her Master's degree. From 1901 to 1939, Marks was a professor of English Literature at Mount Holyoke College. She was a member of the New York State branch of the National Woman's Party and from 1942 to 1947 served as the branch's chairman.	"Jeanette Marks Papers," Mount Holyoke, accessed 5 November 2020 at https://aspace.fivecolleges.edu/repositories/2/resources/279 .
Martin	Anne Martin	1875-1951	Anne Martin of Reno, Nevada, graduated from Stanford University and was a history professor at the University of Nevada. She served as president of the Nevada Woman's Civic League and led the efforts to achieve state suffrage in Nevada in 1914. She also served as legislative chairman for the Congressional Union and later the NWP. She was the first chairman of the NWP in 1916 and became its vice chairman in 1917 when it combined with the Congressional Union. In July 1917, Martin was arrested and jailed for picketing the White House. In 1918, she ran on an independent ticket for the US Senate in Nevada, becoming the first woman to run for the US Senate.	Library of Congress, "Miss Anne Martin, of Reno, Nevada," https://www.loc.gov/item/mnwp000032 .

Last Name	Name	Dates	Biography	Source
Miller	Emma Guffey Miller	1874-1970	A western Pennsylvania native, Emma Guffey Miller received a bachelors degree in History and Political Science from Bryn Mawr College in 1899. After living and teaching in Japan, where she lived with her husband, Miller returned to the United States and became an active supporter of women's suffrage and the League of Women Voters. After the passage of the 19th Amendment, Miller focused her attention on work within the Democratic Party and in 1924 was elected to the Democratic National Convention as a delegate for women's rights. She was the first woman to receive a nomination as a candidate for the US Presidency. She dedicated her political life as an advocate for women's rights and worked on the passage of the ERA until her death in 1970. Miller served as NWP chairman from 1960 to 1964.	Brian Reed, "Emma Guffey Miller," accessed 2 October 2020 at https://butlerhistorical.org/items/show/22 ; SNAC, "Emma (Guffey) Miller," https://snaccooperative.org/ark:/99166/w63g958n .
Murrell	Ethel Ernest Murrell	1903-1986	Ethel Ernest Murrell grew up in Laramie, Wyoming, and attended the Walcott School for Girls in Denver, Colorado. She was later a student at three colleges, George Washington University, the Sorbonne in Paris (in 1923), and the University of Wyoming, but it is uncertain from which she received her bachelors degree. After the death of her first husband in 1928, Murrell married John Murrell, Sr., a prominent Miami lawyer. Ethel went on to receive her law degree from the University of Miami in 1932. Ethel and John practiced law together, with Ethel specializing in women's legal issues. She also supported the campaign for the Florida Married Women's Act, which passed in 1943, which gave married women equal rights with men. Murrell also served as representative to the National Women Lawyer's Association, and in the 1940s joined the NWP. Murrell served as the chairman of the National Woman's Party from 1948 until 1953.	Albany County Historical Society, "Crusading Feminist Ethel Murrell (1903-1986)," accessed 2 October 2020 at https://www.wyoachs.com/new-blog/2018/1/11/crusading-feminist-ethel-murrell-1903-1986-brings-treasures-back-to-laramie .
Pell	Sarah Thompson Pell	1878-1939	Born in New York, Sarah Thompson Pell joined the NWP in 1922. Pell later wrote, "In 1913, "I became interested in equality of men and women before the law and have held to this idea ever since. In 1922 I found this principle embodied in the purpose of the National Woman's Party and immediately joined the organization." In addition to serving as NWP chairman from 1936 to 1939, Pell also served as a member of the national council for 16 years and was a chairman of the NWP advisory committee.	"Mrs. Stephen Pell, Feminist Leader," <i>New York Times</i> , 5 August 1939, accessed at https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1939/08/05/94707059.html ; Library of Congress, "Mrs. Stephen Pell," accessed 2 October 2020 at https://www.loc.gov/resource/mnwp.155019/ .
Pollitzer	Anita Pollitzer	1894-1975	Originally from Charleston, South Carolina, Anita Pollitzer later trained as an artist in New York City. She graduated from the School of Practical Arts at the Teachers College at Columbia University and from Hunter College before marrying freelance press agent Elie Charlier Edson in 1928. Pollitzer earned a master's degree in international law from Columbia University in 1933. Pollitzer was a leader in both the suffrage and equal rights movements as a member of the NWP. She was longtime member of the NWP executive committee and served as national secretary (1921-1926), national congressional secretary, Congressional Committee vice-chairman, national vice-chairman (1927-1938), and national chairman (1945-1949). Pollitzer wrote for Equal Rights and testified repeatedly before congressional committees, successfully bringing the ERA to the Senate calendar for the first time in 1938. That same year, Pollitzer joined with Paul to form the World Woman's Party (WWP). In 1945, she succeeded Paul as NWP chairman. Pollitzer was honorary national chairman of the NWP from 1949 until her death.	Library of Congress, "Officers and National Organizers," accessed 5 October 2020 at https://www.loc.gov/collections/women-of-protest/articles-and-essays/selected-leaders-of-the-national-womans-party/officers-and-national-organizers/ .
Powell	Ernestine Breisch Powell	1906-2003	Born in West Virginia, Ernestine Breisch Powell later moved to Ohio, where she enrolled in the YMCA Law School in Dayton. She became a member of the Ohio bar in 1929 and started a career in tax and corporate law. Powell was active in the women's rights movement in Ohio and was a member of the NWP, serving as its chairman from 1953 to 1954. Powell also served as Alice Paul's personal lawyer.	Ohio History Central, "Ernestine E. Breisch," accessed 5 October 2020 at https://ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Ernestine_E._Breisch .
Ransome	Amy C. Ransome	1872-1942	Amy Cordoba Rock Ransome of California served in several leadership roles within the NWP. She was the Western Regional Chairman of the NWP, California state chairman, treasurer of the World Woman's Party, and vice chairman of the NWP. In 1939, Ransome served as chairman along with Anna Wiley. In 1937, Alice Paul asked Ransome to attend the 37th annual assembly of the League of Nations in Geneva, Switzerland. In addition to her work with the NWP, Ransome also served as president of the American Association of University Women and during World War I spearheaded a chapter of the Women's Land Army of America. An avid gardener, Ransome improved the garden at the Belmont House in 1937. Ransome died from a fall at age 70 while visiting Alice Paul at Paul's home in Vermont.	"Mrs. Ransome Killed by Fall Downstairs," <i>New York Times</i> , 15 August 1942, accessed at https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1942/08/15/88111571.html ; SNAC, "Ransome, Amy C.," accessed 5 October 2020 at https://snaccooperative.org/ark:/99166/w6z32v7s ; Kristina R. Gaddy, "The Farmerettes of Washington, DC," accessed 5 October 2020 at http://www.kristinagaddy.com/blog/the-farmerettes-of-washington-dc .
Smith	Jane Norman Smith	1874-1953	Born in New Jersey, Jane Norman Smith participated in the 1913 suffrage march in Washington, DC, and was a member of the New York chapter of the NWP. After the passage of the 19th Amendment, Smith helped reorganize the NWP in 1921 and continued her work by lobbying New York representatives when the legislation was brought to Congress in 1923. Smith also supported the NWP's international activities. In 1926, the governor of New York appointed Smith to represent the state at the Congress of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance in Paris and spoke at the Pan-American Conference in Havana, Cuba, in 1928. Smith served as NWP chairman from 1927 until 1929.	Radcliff Institute, "Jane Norman Smith and the National Woman's Party," accessed 5 October 2020 at https://www.radcliffe.harvard.edu/schlesinger-library/blog/jane-norman-smith-and-national-womans-party .
Stevens	Doris Stevens	1888-1963	Doris Stevens was an American suffragist, woman's legal rights advocate, and author. She was the first female member of the American Institute of International Law and first chair of the Inter-American Commission of Women. Stevens was jailed in 1917 along with other suffragists for picketing the White House. She held several important NWP leadership positions, including a position on the executive committee, chairman of NWP's New York branch, and served as Alva Belmont's personal assistant. In addition, Stevens spearheaded the NWP Women for Congress campaign in 1924. She authored the book <i>Jailed for Freedom</i> about the NWP and the suffragist movement, published in 1920.	Suffrage Memorial, "Doris Stevens," accessed 5 October 2020 at https://suffragistmemorial.org/doris-stevens-1888-1892-1963/ .

Last Name	Name	Dates	Biography	Source
Terrell	Mary Church Terrell	1864-1954	Mary Church Terrell was born in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1863 to formerly enslaved parents. As successful business owners, Terrell's parents could afford to send her to college. She received her bachelor's and master's degrees from Oberlin College in Ohio. In 1887, Terrell moved to Washington, DC, and taught at the M Street School, later known as Paul Laurence Dunbar High School. After the lynching of a friend in 1892, Terrell became involved in the early civil rights movement. She served as president of the National Association of Colored Women, a group she helped found in 1896. In 1909, Terrell was one of the founders and charter members of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. She was actively involved in Black women's suffrage and as a member of the National Woman's Party, she picketed the White House. After the passage of the 19th Amendment, Terrell focused on broader civil rights and in 1950, at the age of 86, she challenged the segregation of public places in the District of Columbia through organized boycotts, pickets, and sit-ins. As a result of her efforts, the Supreme Court ruled in 1953 that segregated eating facilities were unconstitutional.	https://www.nps.gov/people/mary-church-terrell.htm ; https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/mary-church-terrell .
Walker	Amelia Himes Walker	1880-1974	Amelia Himes Walker was a Quaker and classmate of Alice Paul at Swarthmore. Walker participated in the 1913 suffrage parade in Washington, DC, and was imprisoned in 1917 for her suffragist activities. In 1950, Walker joined Ernestine Hale Bellamy on a three month, 11,000 mile trip across the United States to learn what Americans thought of the Equal Rights Amendment. Walker went on to serve as NWP chairman from 1954 to 1960.	National Woman's Party, "Walker, Amelia H.," accessed 5 October 2020 at https://nationalwomansparty.pastperfectonline.com/byperson?keyword=Walker%2C+Amelia+Himes%2C+1880-1974 ; https://suffragistmemorial.org/amelia-mimi-walker-july-24-1880-july-19-1974-2/ .
Wells	Agnes E. Wells	1876-1959	Agnes E. Wells was one of the nation's leading educators and a "vigorous standard bearer" in the women's equal rights movement. Born in Saginaw, Michigan, Wells received a bachelor of arts degree from Bryn Mawr College and a master of arts degree from Carleton College. She went on to become a faculty member at the University of Michigan in 1917, where she earned a Ph.D. in astronomy in 1924. From 1919 to 1938, Well served as dean of women at Indiana University and was nationally known as an authority on women's guidance and housing. A year before her retirement from Indiana University in 1944, Wells joined the NWP and went on to become its national chairman in 1949, a position she held until 1951. During her two-year term, Wells fought for the ERA and went on a 12,000-mile cross-country speaking tour to encourage others to support equal rights. She was 74 years old at the time.	Saginaw County Hall of Fame, "Dr. Agnes E. Wells," accessed 5 October 2020 at https://saginawcountyhalloffame.org/dr-agnes-e-wells ; Indiana University, "Agnes Wells: Educator, Administrator, Equal Rights Advocate," accessed 5 October 2020 at https://blogs.iu.edu/bicentennialblogs/2017/08/14/dr-agnes-wells-educator-administrator-equal-rights-advocate/#:~:text=Dr.%20Agnes%20Ermina%20Wells%20is%20the%20first%20individual,and%20an%20advocate%20for%20equal%20rights%20for%20women .
Wells-Barnett	Ida B. Wells-Barnett	1862-1931	Born enslaved in Mississippi in 1862, Ida B. Wells-Barnett initially attended Rust College, but was forced to drop out. At the age of 20, she moved with her siblings to Memphis, Tennessee. Wells-Barnett reached a turning point during a train ride from Memphis to Nashville in 1884, when she was forced to move to a car for Black passengers, despite holding a first-class ticket. When Wells-Barnett refused, she was forcibly removed from the train. She later sued the railroad and won a \$500 settlement in a circuit case court, a decision that the Tennessee Supreme Court later overturned. Subsequently, Wells-Barnett began writing about the issues of race and politics in the South and eventually became the owner of two newspapers. After the lynching death of a friend in 1892, Wells-Barnett focused her efforts on anti-lynching campaigns. In 1896, Wells-Barnett established the National Association of Colored Women and was a co-founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. She was active in the women's suffrage movement, specifically focused on voting rights for Black women. In 1913, Wells-Barnett founded the Alpha Suffrage Club in Chicago and as president of the club, was invited to march in the 1913 suffrage parade in Washington, DC. Wells-Barnett refused to follow the request to march at the back of the parade and joined the Chicago contingent of White women in the march. Wells-Barnett and the Alpha Suffrage Club were instrumental in the passage of the Illinois Equal Suffrage Act in 1913.	National Park Service, "Ida B. Wells," accessed 5 October 2020 at https://www.nps.gov/people/idabwells.htm .
Wiley	Anna Kelton Wiley	1877-1964	Born in Oakland, California, Anna Kelton Wiley graduated from George Washington University in 1892. While living in Washington, Wiley became a member of the NWP's national advisory council. She was active in picketing the White House and jailed for her efforts in 1917. In addition to serving as NWP chairman from 1929-1932 and 1939-1942, Wiley also served as editor of Equal Rights from 1940-1945.	Suffrage Memorial, "Anna Kelton Wiley," accessed 5 October 2020 at https://suffragistmemorial.org/anna-kelton-wiley-suffragist/ .



CHRONOLOGY

APPENDIX B

Table 7. National Woman's Party Chronology of Major Events¹

¹ Much of the timeline below was taken directly from Library of Congress, "Historical Timeline of the National Woman's Party," accessed at <https://www.loc.gov/collections/women-of-protest/articles-and-essays/historical-timeline-of-the-national-womans-party/>.

Year	Event
1848	In July, the Seneca Falls Convention is held to advocate for the social, civil, and religious rights of women. The convention resulted in a "Declaration of Sentiments" that included a resolution calling for women's suffrage.
1869	The territory of Wyoming is the first to enfranchise women.
1870	The Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution grants the vote to Black men, but not to women. In the aftermath, the women's suffrage movement splits into two organizations, the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA) and the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA).
1878	The "Anthony Amendment" for woman suffrage is introduced in Congress and reintroduced every year until 1896.
1879	On July 28, Lucy Burns is born in Brooklyn, New York.
1885	On January 11, Alice Paul is born in Mount Laurel, New Jersey.
1890	The AWSA and NWSA merge to form the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA).
1896	The National Association of Colored Women forms from the merger of the Colored Women's League and the National Federation of Afro-American Women, with Mary Church Terrell as president.
1908	Alice Paul and Lucy Burns meet in London, England, while both are working for the Women's Social and Political Union, the British suffrage organization.
1910	Alice Paul, home returning from suffrage activities in England, addresses the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) annual convention in Washington, DC, and endorses the militant tactics of British suffragists.
1912	In December, the NAWSA appoints Alice Paul as the chairman of its Congressional Committee.
1913	NAWSA's Congressional Committee establishes its office in the basement of 1420 F Street NW, Washington, DC.
1913	On March 3, the Congressional Committee and local suffrage groups organize a suffrage parade in Washington, held the day before President Woodrow Wilson's inauguration. On March 17, Alice Paul heads suffrage delegation to President Woodrow Wilson.
1913	In April, Alice Paul and Lucy Burns establish the Congressional Union for Women's Suffrage (CU). By the summer, the CU has established branches in various states.
1913	In November, the CU publishes the first issue of <i>The Suffragist</i> .
1913	In December, NAWSA leadership urges Alice Paul and Lucy Burns to resign from the CU. They refuse, and NAWSA selects a new Congressional Committee.
1914	On March 19, the Senate votes for the first time since 1887 on the federal woman suffrage amendment. The bill is defeated, but reintroduced the following day.
1915	In January, the House votes for the first time on the federal woman suffrage amendment and defeats the measure.
1915	In March, the CU's National Advisory Council adopts a constitution and restructures the CU as a national organization. Despite objections from NAWSA, CU sends organizers to all states to plan conventions and establishes state branches. The CU holds its first national convention in Washington, DC, in December.
1916	In January 1916, the CU moves from its F Street office to the Cameron House (now known as the Benjamin Tayloe House) at 21 Madison Place NW.
1916	In April, 23 CU members leave Washington, DC, on a five-week train tour known as "The Suffrage Special" to garner support for the amendment among women voters.
1916	In June, the National Woman's Party, briefly known as the Woman's Party of Western Voters, is formed in Chicago at a CU convention. The NWP and CU coexist as complementary organizations.
1916	On October 23, Inez Milholland Boissevain collapses on stage in Los Angeles while giving a speech against President Wilson and the Democratic Party. She dies on November 25 and is widely regarded as the first martyr of the American women's suffrage movement.
1917	On January 10, the NWP begins silent pickets in front of the White House.
1917	March 1-4, the CU and NWP merge into one organization, the NWP, at a convention in Washington, DC.
1917	On April 2 and 4, respectively, the suffrage amendment is reintroduced in the House and Senate.
1917	In June, police begin arresting NWP pickets, charged with obstructing traffic. More than 27 women are arrested and six are sentenced to three days in District jail, the first of 168 women to serve prison time for suffrage activities. In August, bystanders begin to attack the pickets.
1917	In November, Alice Paul and Rose Winslow begin a hunger strike after rejected treatment as political prisoners. They are subjected to force-feedings one week later and Paul is transferred to a psychiatric ward at District jail as a means to intimidate and discredit her. Force used on suffrage prisoners in "Night of Terror" prompts public outcry against their treatment. Government authorities later release Alice Paul, Lucy Burns, and other suffrage prisoners.
1918	On January 9, President Wilson publicly declares support for the suffrage amendment. The following day, the House passes the amendment by two-thirds majority.
1918	After being evicted from the Cameron House headquarters by its landlord, the NPS moves across Lafayette Square to 14 Jackson Place NW.
1918	Despite US federal appeals court ruling that arrests and detainment of White House suffrage pickets is unconstitutional, police arrest suffrage demonstrators protesting Senate inaction in Lafayette Park.

Year	Event
1918	In September, the woman suffrage amendment is reintroduced in the Senate. President Wilson asks the Senate to pass the amendment as a war measure. In October, the Senate defeats the amendment, two votes shy of the required two-thirds majority.
1919	In January, the NWP starts “watch fire” demonstrations in front of the White House, burning copies of President Wilson’s speeches. Police once again arrest pickets.
1919	In February, the “Prison Special” tour begins, traveling from Washington, DC, to locations across the country. The tour features speeches by suffragists who served jail sentences.
1919	On May 21, the House passes the federal woman suffrage amendment. The Senate follows on June 4. The NWP begins a campaign to obtain ratification of the 19th Amendment by the required three-fourths majority, or 36 states. On June 10, Michigan and Wisconsin become the first states to ratify the amendment.
1920	On August 18, Tennessee becomes the 36th state to ratify the 19th Amendment. On August 26, the 19th Amendment becomes law.
1920	On November 2, women across the United States vote for the first time in the presidential election.
1921	Through the generous donation of President Alva Belmont, the NWP purchases a new headquarters at 21 First Street, NE, a building known as the “Old Brick Capitol.”
1921	At the December NWP convention in Washington, the party discusses its future and undertakes a new campaign to improve women’s legal, social, and economic status in the United States and world.
1921	In April, the NWP meets with President Warren G. Harding to discuss the Equal Rights Bill.
1922	Following intense lobbying efforts by the NWP, Congress passes the Cable Act, preventing American women from losing their citizenship after marrying aliens.
1923	In February, the NWP publishes its first issue of Equal Rights. In December, the Equal Rights Amendment, drafted by Alice Paul, is introduced in Congress.
1924	The NWP launches its Women For Congress campaign.
1929	The NWP purchases the house at 144 B Street NE (later 144 Constitution Avenue NE) as its new headquarters from Senator and Mrs. Porter Dale.
1931	On January 4, the NWP formally dedicates its new headquarters as the Alva Belmont House. With support from the NWP, Congress passes revisions to the 1922 Cable Act that expands women’s naturalization and citizenship rights.
1933	Alva Belmont dies in Paris on January 26. Funeral services are held in New York City on February 12. Members of the NWP, including Alice Paul, are in attendance.
1934	On May 24, after years of NWP lobbying, the Dickstein-Copeland bill is signed into law, extending the coverage of the 1922 Cable Act and establishing equal nationality laws. On May 25, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signs the Equal Nationality Treaty, drafted by Alice Paul.
1937	NWP lobbying efforts pay off on July 26 when Congress repeals Section 213 of the Legislative Appropriations Act of 1932 (Economy Act), which prohibited federal employees from working for the government if their spouses were also federal employees.
1938	The NWP achieves a major victory when Congress passes the Fair Labor Standards Act.
1938	On October 9, the NWP establishes the World Woman’s Party. In November, the World Woman’s Party is officially incorporated, with the NWP as its American branch.
1941	Problems caused by the Nazis force the WWP to cease its refugee operations in Switzerland. In the spring of 1941, the WWP moves its headquarters to the Belmont House in Washington for the remainder of the war.
1943	On December 12, the NWP rededicates its library at the Belmont House as the Florence Bayard Hilles Library in honor of Hilles, NWP member and one of the country’s leading feminists.
1945	The WWP moves its headquarters to New York City and resumes its equality campaign by successfully lobbying for the inclusion of equality provisions within the United Nations Charter.
1949	The NWP holds its first biennial convention since 1945, following the resolution of a lawsuit between the NWP and members of the “Rump Group,” formed by NWP members who were unhappy with the NWP leadership.
1954	The WWP ceases operations.
1964	Alice Paul and the NWP lead a successful campaign to include Title VII in the Civil Rights Act.
1971	On October 12, the House of Representatives approves the ERA.
1972	On March 22, the Senate approves the ERA and the ratification process begins. By the end of the year, 20 states have ratified the ERA. Alice Paul retires from the NWP and moves to Ridgefield, Connecticut. The Belmont House is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and becomes known as the Sewall-Belmont House.
1974	Public Law 93-486, signed by President Gerald Ford on October 26, 1974, designates the Sewall-Belmont House a National Historic Site and authorizes a cooperative agreement between the National Woman’s Party and the Secretary of the Interior for the preservation and interpretation of the house.
1977	On July 9, Alice Paul dies in Moorestown, New Jersey. On August 26, approximately five thousand people march on Pennsylvania Avenue in memory of Paul and to mark the 57th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment.
1979	The NWP approves the establishment of a separate corporation to hold the Sewall-Belmont House and its Investment and Endowment Fund.
1982	On June 30, time expires before the ratification of the ERA is completed, falling short by three states.
1992	The IRS threatens to revoke the WPC’s tax-exempt status due to improper record keeping and the commingling of operational activities, prompting a 5-year fight and eventual lawsuit between the NWP and the WPC.
1996	The NWP reaches an out-of-court settlement with the WPC. Consequently, the NWP ceases its decades-long lobbying activities and becomes a non-profit, nonpolitical, educational organization eligible for 501c(3) status.
1998	In November, the NWP installs the steps that once lead to the Occoquan Women’s Workhouse in front of the Sewall-Belmont House.
1998	In September, the NWP rededicates the Florence Bayard Hilles Feminist Library.
1998	Congress includes the Sewall-Belmont House in the \$30 million dollar Save America’s Treasures program.

Year	Event
1999	The Commission on the Celebration of Women in American History selects the NWP as one of six outstanding women's heritage organizations nationwide.
2000	The NWP raises necessary matching funds for the Save America's Treasures grant.
2001	The NWP begins restoration work with funds from the Save America's Treasures grant.
2003	The NWP reintroduces the Alice Award and Voice for Women Award in honor of the NWP's founder, Alice Paul.
2013	The NPS initiates a feasibility study to consider the potential of incorporating the Sewall-Belmont house as a full unit of the national park system.
2014	The National Woman's Party discovers mold in the library's HVAC system. \$90,000 is needed to remediate the mold issues.
2015	Senators Barbara Mikulski (D-Md.) and Shelley Moore Capito of West Virginia introduce the Sewall-Belmont House Act (S. 1975) to "establish the Sewall-Belmont House National Historic Site as a unit of the National Park System (NPS)." Mikulski also writes to President Barack Obama asking that he use his presidential power to proclaim the Belmont House a monument.
2016	President Barack Obama designates the Sewall-Belmont House the Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument. The NWP donates the house and 0.34 acres to the National Park Service.
2020	The National Woman's Party dissolves as an independent nonprofit and joins with the Alice Paul Institute (API).



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