

# Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument

National Mall and Memorial Parks  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
900 Ohio Drive, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20024  
www.nps.gov/nama



## ALICE PAUL: THE WOMAN WHO GOT WOMEN THE VOTE



Alice Paul, 1915, photograph by Harris & Ewing, courtesy of the Library of Congress

Alice Paul (1885-1977), a highly educated Quaker, graduated from Swarthmore College with a B.A. in Sociology in 1905 and a Fellowship to the New York School of Philanthropy. She earned an M.A. in Sociology from University of Pennsylvania in 1907, then travelled to England to study at Woodbridge Quaker Study Center in Birmingham. There she became involved in the militant British Suffragette Movement. After she returned to the States she got a Ph.D. in Sociology from Penn with a dissertation on "The Legal Position of Women in Pennsylvania," tracing the history of the American women's movement and identifying woman suffrage as the key issue of the day. A master strategist (examples below), she created a vibrant non-militant but confrontational American Suffragist Movement. From 1913 to 1920 she was the driving force that led to the Nineteenth Amendment, which gave women the vote. In 1922 she earned an LL.B (law degree) from Washington College of Law at American University, then an LL.M (1927) and a Ph.D. (1928) in Civil Laws. Paul lived at the National Woman's Party (NWP) Headquarters – now Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument- until 1972. By the time she left, NWP had spearheaded and Congress had passed 300 bills to further advance women's equality.

### A New Generation; A New Strategy



Congressional Union, January 1913

- When the Fifteenth Amendment (1870) gave all men the vote, separate women's suffrage movements combined into the National American Woman's Suffrage Association (NAWSA.) Their strategy was to fight for each state to allow women the vote.
- **January 1913** Alice Paul and Alva Belmont formulate a new strategy: demanding a National Constitutional Amendment.
- **January 1913** NAWSA allows Paul to head a Congressional Committee in Washington to do this. When her aggressive actions caused NAWSA to object, she formed a more independent Congressional Union (CU), then a National Women's Party (NWP).

### 1913 The First Event begins a strategy of an Event a Month



Cover, Official Program, Woman Suffrage Procession

- **March 3 1913 Woman Suffrage Procession:** Paul and Lucy Burns head the CC. Its first event is a smasher: a grand Woman Suffrage Procession down Pennsylvania Avenue on the eve of President Wilson's Inauguration, while everyone was in town. Police ignore mob assaults on the Suffragists. The press goes wild, drawing attention to the event and making it a media sensation and success.
- **April 7 1913** Five hundred women march to Capitol to submit Petition with 400,000 signatures for National Suffrage (Anthony) Amendment; "Free state" Congressmen welcome them.
- **April 1913 Senate Hearing on Amendment:** 25 Senators speak for the Amendment.
- **April 1913** CC's delegations to Wilson fails to get his support for the Amendment. Harriet Stanton Blatch joins CC; solicits pickets.
- **May 1913** Favorable Senate Committee report on Amendment.

1913



Suffragists arrive in Capital from Across the Nation, 1913.

- **May 1913** Parading Suffragist Delegates arrive from across the Nation, on horses, by train, in cars and walking. Paul leads them into the city by car; hurricane-type storm fails to deter either event or spectators.
- **July 1913** Suffragists converge on Washington by foot, horse, car.
- **July 1913** Paul gets Congressional hearing and testimony.
- **August 1913** Paul speaks at National Council of Women to push for the Amendment.
- **1913** Paul targets Wilson for failure to support Amendment. NAWSA objects to this as partisan; NAWSA/CU friction mounts.

### 1913-1917: Targeting the President and Party in Power



- **November 15, 1913** Paul establishes a CU publication, *The Suffragist*, to explain its strategy to the public in the face of NAWSA objections; persuades Nina Allender to provide cartoons for the new publication.
- **December 1913** Under pressure from NAWSA, Paul and Burns resign as chairs of CC and focus activities through CU.
- **January 11 1914** First annual meeting of the Congressional Union.
- **May 9 1914** Envoys from States arrive and march to Capitol.

1915 – 1916

### Cross Country Efforts Escalate

- **February 20 - December 4 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco**; Paul takes advantage, establishes a Booth, décor; holds parties and ball for wealthy patrons; stages kick-off for her next event, a cross-country car tour to collect Petition signatures for the Amendment.
- **Summer 1915** Paul travels cross country soliciting support for CU.
- **June 5-7 1916** CU arranges Convention of Women Voters at Chicago's Blackstone Theatre: National Woman's Party founded.

1917

### April 6, 1917, United States enters World War I, Suppresses First Amendment



Silent Sentinels picket White House, 1917.

- **November 25 1916** Inez Milholland, collapses while speaking on cross-country Suffrage tour and dies, making her a martyr for the Cause.
- **December 5 1916** NWP members hiding banner under cloak, take first row seats in balcony of Congress and unfurl "Mr. President, What will you do for Suffrage?" during Wilson's annual address.
- **December 25 1916** Paul rents Capitol's Statuary Hall to celebrate Inez Milholland and infer her portrait belongs in the Hall; casually suggests her keynote speaker "Just deliver something like Lincoln's Gettysburg Address."



Watch Fire Demonstration, 1919.

- **January 1917** "Silent Sentinel" Campaign pickets White House, continuing daily (except Sundays) for months.
- **March 4 1917** Grand Picket, White House: Suffragists march despite rain storm. Police arrest many Sentinels over time, including Paul and Lucy Burns.
- **November 1917** Prisoners protest by hunger strike; prison aids force feeds them.
- **November 14 1917** "Night of Terror:" At the notorious Occoquan Workhouse, guards beat and abused the Suffragists. Word of the assaults leaks out, embarrassing Wilson, who had been claiming America is a "bastion of freedom."
- **January 9, 1918** Wilson reneges; supports Suffrage Amendment.
- **October 7, 1918** NWP begins picketing with banners in front of Capitol and Senate Office Building; police and crowds harass them, and many are arrested without charges.

1919-1920

### August 24, 1920, 19th Amendment becomes Law



Paul toasts success at Suffrage Flag with 36 ratification stars, 1920.

- **January 1 1919** "Watch Fire" Demonstrations begin and continue for months: NWP members light fires in an urn at Lafayette Park, opposite White House, and burn Wilson's speeches; many, including Paul (January 4) are arrested.
- **February 15 1919** "Prison Special" cross-country tour for Suffrage.
- **May 21, 1919** When Wilson operates behind the scenes for the Amendment, House passes it with the required 2/3rds majority;
- **June 4 1919** Senate follows, passes Suffrage Amendment.
- Paul begins National Amendment Ratification Campaign.
- **August 24 1920** Tennessee, the necessary 36th State for ratification, votes for Suffrage Amendment; and women have the vote.