

The

Orangetown Crier

News from the Orangetown Historical Museum and Archives

SUMMER 2020

SAFETY FIRST!

We are complying with all rules and regulations required by the Rockland County Department of Health, NYS Dept. of Health and the Center for Disease Control. We are limiting visitor occupancy to no more than 6 visitors at a time. *Orangetown Suffragist* will be open Tuesdays & Fridays from 10-2pm and Sundays from 1-4pm. Thank you for wearing a mask while visiting and maintaining a physical distance of 6' from other visitors.



Miss Jane Elliott of Orangeburg at center, posing with the Twenty First Machine Gun Battalion, American Expeditionary Forces at Parc de Saint Cloud in the Hauts-de-Seine near Paris, 1919

Despite being denied the right to vote at home, Jane Elliott of Orangeburg served with distinction during WWI. She was a canteen volunteer through the YWCA with the 7th Division, 21st Machine Gun Battalion Expeditionary Forces. Her efforts were praised by Gen. John J. Pershing in his letter of commendation on May 10, 1919.

“
The best protection any woman can have is courage.”

Jeanette Rankin
1880-1973

the highest praise. You have added new laurels to the already splendid record of American womanhood. It is a privilege to testify that your glorious accomplishments in the war have given you a new place in the hearts of officers and men of the Army, and have earned you the admiration of a grateful nation.”

“...Whether administering to the sick or wounded, or engaged in the innumerable activities requiring your aid, the cheerfulness, loyalty and efficiency which have characterized your efforts deserve

Following this tradition of service, we recognize the tremendous efforts of the women healthcare workers of the Town of Orangetown during the Covid-19 pandemic – thank you!

“*Forget what the world thinks of you stepping out of your place; think your best thoughts, speak your best words, work your best works – looking to your own conscience for approval.*”

Susan B. Anthony
1820-1906

“

*To the wrongs
that need resistance,
to the rights
that need assistance,
to the future
in the distance;
give yourselves.”*

*Carrie
Chapman
Catt*
1859-1947

Carrie Chapman Catt proposed the creation of a League of Women Voters to 'finish the fight' in 1919 in her address at the 50th Convention of the American Woman Suffrage Association in St. Louis, Missouri.

The Rockland County League of Women Voters

by Linda Berns



The first league to form in Rockland was in Nyack in the 1940's. It was started by the actress Helen Hayes. It became part of the Clarkstown/Orangetown League which had formed in 1951. There was also a Town of Ramapo League which merged with them in 1973 to become the Tri-Town League. The North Rockland League (Stonypoint and Haverstraw) started in 1969 merged with Tri-Town to become the Rockland County League in 1979. Each town league did a study of their town at that time.

The county of Rockland consists of 5 towns. Historically, each was governed by a town supervisor who met periodically to determine county affairs. Since the population varied widely between towns, the Rockland League determined that this was inequitable and that

change was needed, even going to the US Supreme Court charging that the situation denied the right of one person one vote. We won the case in 1971 and the County Legislature was established, now 17 members, based on population.

Many of the issues we worked hard on were establishing district courts, a countywide police force, affordable housing and a county charter. Our big success, after many attempts, was in seeing a county charter passed in 1984. Rockland County now has a legislature, a county executive, elected at large every 4 years, while the towns continue to have their own supervisors and town councils for local affairs. We were active on the commission on Women's Issues for the 75th anniversary of the 19th Amendment in 1995 and led a parade that culminated at the Rockland County Courthouse along with the Rockland Chapter of the American Association of University Women.

“If particular care and attention is not paid to the ladies, we are determined to form a revolution, and will not hold ourselves bound by any laws in which we have no voice or representation.”

Abigail Smith Adams
1774-1818

A special supplement was printed in the August 1995 issue of the Rockland Review entitled 'Women in Rockland'. Of the many interesting articles we highlight here a portion by Robert Cooney from the Women Win the Vote Gazette published that year by the National Women's History project.



The Enduring Significance of the American Woman Suffrage Movement

by Robert Coone

Women vote today because of the women's suffrage movement, a courageous and persistent political campaign which lasted over 72 years, involved tens of thousands of women and men and resulted in enfranchising one half of the citizens of the United States.

Inspired by idealism and grounded in sacrifice, the suffrage campaign is of enormous political and social significance, yet it is virtually unacknowledged in the chronicles of American history. Women won the vote. They were not given it, granted it or anything else. They won it repeatedly by the slimmest of margins, which underscores the difficulty and magnitude of their victories. In the successful California referendum of 1911, the margin was one vote per precinct. In the House, suffrage passed the first time with exactly the number needed, with supporters coming in from hospitals and homes to cast their ballots. In the Senate it passed by two votes. The ratification in Tennessee, the last state, passed the legislation in 1920 by a single vote at the very last minute, during a recount.

Women were a poor, unarmed and disenfranchised class when they first organized to gain political power in the mid-1880's. The struggle for the ballot took over 70 years of constant,

determined campaigning, yet it didn't take a single life, and its achievement has lasted.

Without firing a single shot or issuing a single threat, women won for themselves rights that men have launched violent rebellions to achieve. This deliberate rejection of violence may be one of the reasons the movement has not received the attention lavished on other periods of American history – or the suffrage movement in Britain. But it should not deceive us; this struggle was waged every bit as seriously as any struggle for equality, and we would do well to consider how women were able to do what men have rarely tried, to change society in a positive and lasting way without violence and death.

The movement's many nonviolent strategies deserve closer inspection, particularly because they repeatedly offered suffragists the way out of strategic binds, dead ends, discouragements and immobility. The nonviolent approach was a logical strategy, as a remarkable number of prominent suffrage leaders, from Lucretia Mott to Alice Paul were Quakers and pacifists, exponents of non-resistance, and opponents of war and violence. They were clear about their goals: not victory over men, but equality; not constant war, but reconciliation.

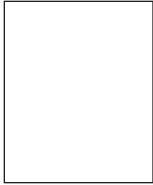
Woman suffrage records the recent and useful experience of ordinary citizens forced to fight for their own rights against tremendous odds and social inequities. Here are models of political leadership, of women organizers and administrators, activists and lobbyists. Here are the first women lawyers and doctors and ministers, the first women candidates, the first office holders. Here are stories of achievement, of ingenious strategies and outrageous tactics used to outwit the opponents and make the most of limited resources. Here are new definitions and images of women in our national life, which give a more accurate picture of the past and which help explain the way American women are treated today. The suffrage movement included many Americans whose talents and abilities would have made them prime candidates for national office, had the political system and their opportunities been equal. Women like Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Lucy Stone, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Carrie Chapman Catt, Alice Paul and others proved themselves, even without the franchise, to be politically important, enormously competent, highly influential and widely respected leaders with few equals among their male contemporaries.

“The way to right wrongs is to turn the light of truth upon them.”

Ida B. Wells
1862-1931



196 Chief Bill Harris Way
 Orangeburg, New York 10962
 Tel. (845) 398-1302
 www.orangetownmuseum.com



PLEASE VISIT US WITH A FACE MASK.
 We can accommodate no more than 6 visitors at a time

at The DePew House
 196 Chief Bill Harris Way
 Orangeburg, New York
Office, Archives by Appointment
 (845) 398-1302

ORANGETOWN Suffragist

Open Tuesday & Friday 10-2,
 Sunday 1-4pm
 Admission is Free;
 Donations accepted

at The Salyer House
 213 Blue Hill Road
 Pearl River, New York
**A Spy in Our Midst,
 Our Dutch
 Sandstone Houses**
 &
**At Home
 in Orangetown**
by Appointment

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Betty Friedan 1921-2006

In 1956 graduate of Smith College Betty Friedan with her husband and three children moved to a stone barn in Sneden's Landing. By mid 1957, when Betty was 36, the family had settled in an Italianate 1868 Victorian on River Road in Grand View. It was also in 1957 that she began work on a questionnaire distributed among 200 of her fellow Smith classmates on the occasion of their 15th college reunion. The startling patterns that emerged from this research turned into Friedan's best selling work of non-fiction, *The Feminine Mystique*. Often called one of the most important books of the 20th century it led to a nationwide dialog regarding the rights of women in America.

THE ORANGETOWN HISTORICAL MUSEUM & ARCHIVES
 Mary Cardenas, MUSEUM DIRECTOR • Emily Hingle, CURATOR OF COLLECTIONS
 Elizabeth Skrabonja, CURATOR FOR EXHIBITIONS • Steve Schwinn, BUILDINGS MANAGER
 The Orangetown Historical Museum & Archives was founded in 1992 to acquire, preserve and exhibit objects which reflect primarily the history of the Town of Orangetown. The Museum's additional, but not lesser mission is to document, research, promote and publicize the town's rich, historical heritage of the town for the people of Orangetown.

TOWN OF ORANGETOWN

Teresa Kenny, SUPERVISOR
 Jerry Bottari, Thomas Diviny, Denis Troy and Paul Valentine, COUNCILMEN

FRIENDS OF THE ORANGETOWN MUSEUM
 Your membership in the Friends of the Orangetown Museum helps to collect and preserve the history of Orangetown. Members will receive notices of programs and events as well as free admission to the Museum's special exhibits and events. The Museum is a 501 (C) (3) organization and all donations are tax deductible.

STUDENT/SENIOR \$10 SINGLE \$15 FAMILY \$20
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