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NEBRASKA

MEN'S ASSOCIATION

OPPOSED TO

WOMAN SUFFRAGE

MANIFESTO



History
NEBRASKA

This early 20th century pamphlet was collected by suffragists Katherine Sumney and Grace Richardson of Omaha. They preserved it along with other examples of contemporary anti-suffragist literature. It is part of the Grace Richardson Collection, RG1073.AM, at History Nebraska. history.nebraska.gov

NEBRASKA MEN'S ASSOCIATION OPPOSED TO WOMAN
SUFFRAGE.

*To the Electors of the
State of Nebraska:*

At a meeting of men lately held in the city of Omaha, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

“RESOLVED, That it is the sense of this meeting that a Manifesto be prepared, issued and circulated, setting forth the reasons for our opposition to the pending constitutional amendment providing for equal (woman) suffrage and requesting the co-operation of the voters of the State, and that such Manifesto be signed by all the men present.”

We yield to none in our admiration, veneration and respect for woman. We recognize in her admirable and adorable qualities and sweet and noble influences which make for the betterment of mankind and the advancement of civilization. We have ever been willing and ready to grant to woman every right and protection, even to favoritism in the law, and to give her every opportunity that makes for development and true womanhood. We have a full appreciation of all the great things which have been accomplished by women in education, in charity and in benevolent work, and in other channels of duty too numerous to mention by which both men and women have been benefited, society improved, and the welfare of the human race advanced. We would take from women none of their privileges as citizens, but we do not believe that women are adapted to the political work of the world.

The discussion of all questions growing out of the social and family relations and local economic conditions has no direct relationship to the right of women to participate in the political affairs of government. The right of suffrage does not attach of right to the owners of property, for, if so, all other persons should be disfranchised. It is not a fundamental right of taxpayers, for a great body of men voters are not taxpayers, and nine-tenths of the women who would become voters if woman suffrage were adopted would be non-taxpayers. It is not an inherent right of citizenship, for the time never was in the whole history of the world when the franchise was granted to all citizens.

Taxation and citizenship do not go together, for all persons who own property located in the United States pay taxes thereon even though they be aliens. The tax attaches to the property even though the owner be a citizen of England or of Germany or of France. If taxation should only attach to citizens, then our vast body of millionaires might escape taxation by taking up their citizenship in Canada or in England.

Franchise is a privilege of government granted only to those to whom the government sees fit to grant it. The extent or the limitations upon that grant of privilege rests in the wisdom and the sound judgment of the statesmen who created and of those who have continued its administration.

Chief Justice Marshall said: "The granting of the franchise has always been regarded in the practice of nations as a matter of expediency and not as

an inherent right." The right of suffrage is not necessarily one of the privileges or immunities of citizenship was decided by the Supreme Court of the United States, in *Minor vs. Happersett*, 21 Wallace, 162, and since then has been recognized as a part of the fundamental law of this country. In *Gougar vs. Timberlake*, 148 Indiana, 38, it was again ruled "that the privilege of voting is not an inherent or natural right * * * and there is no right of suffrage except as it is given by the Constitution and the written laws."

Judge Cooley, in his work on *The Principles of Constitutional Law*, made an unanswerable statement when he said: "Suffrage cannot be the natural right of the individual, because it does not exist for the benefit of the individual, but for the benefit of the State itself."

The decision of the Supreme Court of the United States was brought about by the unlawful attempt of Mrs. Minor to exercise the right of suffrage in violation of law. The decision of the Supreme Court of Indiana was brought about by the wrongful attempt of Helen Gougar to exercise the elective franchise in violation of law.

As a law-abiding people, men and women alike should recognize once and for all that the right of suffrage is not a natural or inherent right of citizenship, but can come only by grant from the government.

We must also recognize that woman suffrage is inconsistent with the fundamental principles upon which our representative government was founded,

and to accept it now involves revolutionary changes. The framers of the Federal Constitution, a body of the wisest men the country has ever produced, did not recognize or provide for woman suffrage. No one of the original thirteen states which adopted it provided in their Constitutions for woman suffrage. True, it was permitted in New Jersey from 1776 to 1807, a period of thirty-one years, when it was taken away by Statute, by reason of unsatisfactory conditions and results.

After the close of the Civil War, the Southern states which had gone into rebellion were admitted back into the Union under constitutions limiting suffrage to men. These precedents in our governmental history were never departed from until in recent years.

The greatest danger to the Republic of the United States today, as it always has been in governments where the people rule, is in an excitable and emotional suffrage. If the women of this country would always think coolly and deliberate calmly, if they could always be controlled and act by "judgment and not under passion," they might help us to keep our institutions "eternal as the foundations of the continent itself;" but the philosophers of history, and the experience of the ages past and present tell us in unanswerable arguments, and teach us by illustrations drawn from actual experience, that governments have been overturned or endangered in periods of great excitement by emotional suffrage and the speech and writings of intolerant people.

It was in unrestrained and unlimited democracies,

where the populace were swayed by the power of the orator which sometimes reached the degree of frenzy, that the states of Greece were prevented from consolidating into a substantial government, and which led to their final overthrow and ultimate destruction. "Open that terrible page of the French Revolution and the days of terror, when the click of the guillotine and the rush of blood through the streets of Paris demonstrated to what extremities the ferocity of human nature can be driven by political passion. Who led those blood-thirsty mobs? Who shrieked loudest in that hurricane of passion? Woman. Her picture upon the pages of history today is indelible.

In the city of Paris, in those ferocious mobs, the controlling agency, nay, not agency, but the controlling and principal power, came from those whom God has intended to be the soft and gentle angels of mercy throughout the world."

It is within the memory of men now living that agitation, most generally emotional and sometimes turbulent, precipitated the Civil War, which cost this country billions in money and hundreds of thousands of human lives. Before the War began, there were men and women in the North who so far forgot their patriotism that they were willing to let the Southern states depart in peace and the Union be dissolved rather than yield up their emotional and sentimental convictions on the question of slavery. If they had succeeded, it would have left the South as an independent government and not a single slave would have been freed. It required the sound judgment and the unflinching patriotism of that mighty

man, Abraham Lincoln, to still these turbulent waters and to say that the Union should be preserved, with slavery if he could but without slavery if need be. It is that high standard of patriotism this country must have in all its electors if our republican form of government is to be perpetuated.

It is well known that all the Latin races, by reason of their temperamental conditions, are excitable and emotional. Wherever they have attempted republican forms of government, revolutions have been frequent. We call in witness the republics of Central and South America.

It has been said if woman suffrage should become universal in the United States that in times of great excitement arising out of sectional questions or local conditions, this country would be in danger of State insurrections and seditions and that, in less than a hundred years, revolutions would occur and our republican form of government would come to an end. The United States should guard against emotional suffrage. What we need is to put more logic and less feeling into public affairs.

This country has already extended suffrage beyond reasonable bounds. Instead of enlarging it, there are strong reasons why it should be curtailed. It would have been better for wise and safe government and the welfare of all the people if there had been some reasonable standard of fitness for the ballot.

During the intense feeling and turbulent conditions growing out of the Civil War, suffrage was so extended that many of the Southern states were turned over to the political control of those not sufficiently informed to conduct good government. It has taken half a century of strenuous effort to correct that mistake. The granting of universal woman suffrage would greatly increase the existing evil and put it beyond the possibility of correction except by an ultimate revolution.

We hear it frequently stated that there is no argument against woman suffrage except sentiment. We can reply with equal force that there is no argument for woman suffrage except sentiment, and that often misguided and uninformed. Some suffragists insist that if woman suffrage became universal "it would set in motion the machinery of an earthly paradise." It was a woman of high standing in the literary and journalistic field who answered: "It is my opinion it would let loose the wheels of purgatory."

Some suffragists insist that they want the privilege of voting for the purpose of making better laws. We challenge them to name a state where woman suffrage prevails that has better laws for both men and women than the man-made laws of Nebraska.

Suffragists frequently ask the question, "If we want to vote why should other people object?" If it is wrong, they should not ask it, any more than they should ask the privilege of committing a crime. If it is a wrong against the state, every other man and

woman has a right to object and it is their duty to object.

There always have been brilliant women as well as brilliant men, but that brilliancy did not have its birthright in suffrage. We may value paintings and sculpture and musical compositions just as we prize volumes of poetry upon their individual merits, without discrimination or inquiry whether the painter, the sculptor, the composer or the poet is a man or a woman. Yet the world has never known a genius in any of these vocations who has exhibited the qualities of statesmanship. It is only in countries where man has hewed the way to governmental and religious freedom that woman has risen to independence and greatness.

"There are spheres in which feeling should be paramount. There are kingdoms in which the heart should reign supreme. That kingdom belongs to woman—the realm of sentiment, the realm of love, the realm of gentler and holier and kindlier attributes, that make the name of wife, mother and sister next to the name of God himself." But it is not in harmony with suffrage and has no place in government.

We submit these considerations in all candor to the men of this State. Ultimately the decision of this question at the polls is a man's question. We ask your co-operation. We request all persons wishing to join this Association to communicate with Mr.

J. B. Haynes, Secretary, 748 Omaha National Bank Building, Omaha, Nebraska. We likewise urge that local organizations be formed.

Omaha, Nebraska, July 6, 1914.

Signed by:

JOSEPH H. MILLARD
JOHN A. McSHANE
JOHN LEE WEBSTER
LUTHER DRAKE
JOHN C. COWIN
WILLIAM F. GURLEY
WILLIAM D. McHUGH
FRANK T. HAMILTON
WILLIAM WALLACE
JOHN A. MUNROE
FRANK BOYD
GERRIT FORT
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