Women involved in Maine's political culture

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WOMEN INVOLVED IN
MAINE'S POLITICAL CULTURE

by

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this paper is to investigate the development of "political women" in the State of Maine. The first section outlines the suffrage movement in Maine and highlights information on the struggle for women's voting rights. It provides descriptions of the women who were involved in the movement and their collective political activity during the quest for enfranchisement.

The next section looks at the involvement of women in the State Legislature between the years 1920-1970. The study focuses on the personal and political characteristics of these women and analyzes their political participation in the Legislature as shaped by State and societal norms throughout the decades.

The final section looks at the women serving in the 110th Legislative session. It explores their personal characteristics and profiles, their prior political experience, their legislative records and accomplishments as legislators, and their attitudes toward the role of women in politics today. This information is supplemented by an audio-visual production which portrays the political situation of women involved in Maine's governmental structure. This slide-tape presentation is on file at the Colby College Audio-Visual Department, Waterville, Maine.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the many people who made this project a reality. In the course of my research I came in contact with a lot of people without whose help and encouragement, I may not have finished at all.

First of all, I'd like to thank the people at Colby who helped me in this endeavor: Phyllis Mannocchi for her help in first devising the concept. Also, Phyllis deserves credit for raising my consciousness about women's issues and encouraging me to further investigate this field; Rita Bouchard for helping to set me in the right direction at the very beginning; Sonya Rose for her financial support that made the many trips to Augusta and beyond possible; Patience-Anne Lenk and Fraser Cocks for the use and loan of the League of Women Voters Collection; Susan Wechsler, George Raiche, and especially Keng Min Low for their patience and assistance with the computer work; Jane Hunter and Charlie Dassett for their comments and time spent on my first and final drafts; and finally Bob McArthur for his constant encouragement.

There are also a number of people who contributed to this project in other ways. Jackie Potter, Marilyn Mavrinac, Ruth Joseph, the members of the Maine Commission on Women, and all the panelists of the Winning With Women seminars made the trips to Portland and Bangor a valuable
experience as I gained a lot of information for use in my slide-tape presentation as well as information about the complexities and realities facing women in Maine politics today.

There are many people in Augusta who made my research that much easier. Edith Hary and her helpful staff at the Law and Legislative Library in the Maine State House were always willing to answer questions and help me in finding any information. Mary Herman contributed her time and knowledge of the workings of the Maine Legislature and constantly introduced me to legislators. Edwin Pert, the Clerk of the House, distributed many messages for me, and finally John L. Martin, Speaker of the House, allowed me access to the floor of the House, providing me with an insiders viewpoint to the workings of the Legislature; combined with the many events of that day, it was one of the most educating experiences that I had.

There are also the many women who helped in making this paper possible. These women are the legislators who are presently serving in the 110th State Legislature. Without their time and efforts on my behalf, this paper would not be in existence today. These women are: Nancy Clark, Barbara Gill, Mary Najarian, Barbara Trafton, Beverly Bustin, and Charlotte Sewell in the Maine Senate; Lorraine Chonko, Susan Bell, Karen Brown, Ruth Foster, Gennette MacNair Ingraham, Stephanie Locke, Mary MacBride, Nancy Masterton, Angela

Special thanks are extended to Judy Kany and Harriet Ketover for their help in making arrangements and taking the extra time to assist me in various ways. These special thanks are also extended to Libby Mitchell who allowed me the chance to follow her around for the day and valuable insights into: a typical day in the life of a Maine legislator, the inside viewpoint of the leadership's role in legislating, and the scope of her position as the first woman Majority Floor Leader.

Last, but certainly not least, I'd like to thank Sandy Maisel. Sandy, you made the whole thing worthwhile. I had the opportunity to explore many avenues of political life and I feel I learned more in this experience than I ever did in a classroom lecture. It was a valuable experience, I was challenged, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart for all your support, encouragement, and advice. I don't hate you and I never will, no matter how much you yell at me! Thanks!
INTRODUCTION

The State of Maine has had a long history of women involved in politics. The emergence of women's first political activity occurred in the mid-nineteenth century during the crusade for suffrage rights. Since that time, Maine has always had women involved at some level in the political system. This paper will look closely at the collective activity of women exhibited during the quest for enfranchisement, follow the patterns of involvement of women within the political realm, study the characteristics of Maine's women politicians, and analyze the political participation displayed by these women throughout the decades.

For a study with such a broad base, it was necessary for me to narrow the focus of this analysis. This study will look at the participation of women at the State level. I chose the State level primarily because most of the information available to me around the State concentrated on this area.

The first section of this paper discusses the suffrage movement in Maine and relies heavily upon a collection of material from the Maine League of Women Voters. This collection is composed of newspaper clippings, pamphlets, brochures, letters, and correspondence kept by the Maine Woman Suffrage Association from 1895-1919. It contains valuable information on the struggle for women's voting rights as well as detailed descriptions of the women who were involved
in the movement. Many of the same women were later involved
in the State chapter of the LWV as the League played a vital
role in many women's lives after ratification of the
Nineteenth Amendment. For this reason, the LWV collection
also provides background information on these women and pol-
itical activities of women between 1920-1940.

The next section looks at those women who served in the
State House from 1940-1970. The material for this section
was gathered from the Law and Legislative Library at the
State House in Augusta. The library contains newspaper
clippings on almost every woman who ever served in the Maine
legislature. Some of the files are lengthy, others very
brief. Some of the information is from local town news
items and obituary notices, but most of it is from articles
written at the time of the legislators' terms in office.

The last section focuses upon those women who are
presently serving in the Maine legislature. Research about
these women was gathered by several means. I sent out an
anonymous questionnaire to the 42 women serving in the 110th
legislative session. (See Appendix 1.) Of these 42, I
received 20 or 47 per cent back. The information I hoped to
get from these questionnaires was: the personal charac-
teristics or profiles of the women, their prior political
experience, their legislative records and accomplishments as
legislators, the image they portray, and their attitude
towards women in politics today. I supplemented this infor-
mation with personal interviews conducted with over half of
the women during the legislative session this spring.

The focus of this paper is to try and discover how
Maine reached the point where it is today, ranked as the
fourth highest State in the nation in terms of percentage of
women legislators. Each year, Maine has an increasing
number of women seeking political office and it is my hope
to discover what factors exist in this State that create and
perpetuate this phenomenon.
THE BEGINNINGS OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Women's quest for participation in Maine's political culture has been a long and arduous one. Women have been fighting for their political rights in this State since the mid-nineteenth century when their desire to represent themselves first became an issue. Women in Maine had long been denied certain political opportunities because of their sex. They were not recognized as "full-class" citizens nor were they allowed the same rights given to the men of the State. Therefore, when the suffrage issue reached national proportions, Maine women concerned about their political freedom began to take an active part in the movement.

As awareness of the question increased, the issue received a good deal of attention and a corresponding amount of the general public became interested. Women and men, both in favor of and opposed to the issue, were soon involved as the issue worked its way into the public's consciousness.

In order to best illustrate the effect that women suffrage had on the evolvement of women's political participation, it is necessary to look at the history of the movement in Maine, compare it with the national perspective, and study the eventual outcome passage of the amendment had.
The Movement

The first women's rights convention was held in Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848. The first active participants of the women's rights movement and organizers of the conference were Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucy Stone, and Susan B. Anthony. These women were instrumental in forming a coalition to support and propagate the issue. From this convention came the "Woman's Declaration of Independence," drafted by Elizabeth Cady Stanton. This began with the statement, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men and women are created equal that...the history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of tyranny over her." This was followed by a list of specific grievances and ended with the charge that "...man has endeavored in every way to destroy woman's confidence in her own powers, to lessen her self-respect and to make her willing to lead a dependent and abject life."

The major goal of women's rights then became the duty to secure all women their "sacred right" to the elective franchise. These women became convinced that the only way for women to gain any political recognition was through the use of their collective voices and forces.

2 Ibid.
**Maine's Beginnings**

The first recorded meeting of those interested in gaining "political recognition" and securing the right of suffrage for the women of Maine was a convention held in Bangor in the year 1854. Susan B. Anthony, Caroline W. Dall and Dr. Harriet K. Hunt spoke at the convention on the topic of women's voting rights. The following year, Lucy Stone visited the State for the same purpose and spoke in Augusta and Cornish. The interest exhibited by the women organizing and attending these conventions typified the belief that Maine women were concerned about their rights and were willing to turn this concern into action.

The first use of women's collective forces was demonstrated by the movement toward a formal organization in 1868. This led to the formation of a suffrage club in Rockland and another in Portland two years later. The meetings for these clubs were advertised in local newspapers in the following manner: "All who favor woman suffrage and the restoration of woman to her natural inalienable rights, are wanted for consultation at the...." The two clubs were active during their first few years as they were responsible for the first submission of a suffrage petition to the State Legislature in the year 1871. The activity did not lessen

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4 Ibid.
as the devoted men and women who joined the clubs did every­thing in their power to draw attention to the political reality of the issue.

In January, 1873, as the campaign for suffrage rights gained in popularity, a meeting was called for the purpose of organizing a State Woman Suffrage Association and "...inaugurating such measures for the advancement of the cause as the wisdom of the convention may suggest." Julia Ward Howe, Lucy Stone and other distinguished speakers addressed the gathering. The result was a permanent organization formed under the direction of the Hon. Joshua Nye.

The correspondence of this organization indicated that the group was not only interested in the quest for enfranchisement but focused upon many women's issues in order to lend credence to their controversial argument. Detailed coverage of many women's advancements was kept. This included: The first women admitted to local colleges, the admission of Clara Hapgood Nash to the New England Bar Association in 1872, the ordaination of a woman in 1873 as well as another commissioned by the Governor to solemnize marriages and another appointed to register deeds. Several women were chosen to serve on local school boards in various towns in 1874, and finally in 1876, the first woman was

5 Ibid.
6 There was no explanation given for the presence of a man at the head of this "woman's" organization and it was several years before a woman was so honored.
elected president of the State Woman Suffrage Association.

All of these facts were collected and used to portray the progress that women had made in various directions. "...because women of a larger mold, loftier ambitions and nobler self-respect than the average have been willing to face the opposition of the world for the sake of liberty."8 The desire for political liberty and personal freedom became the primary focus of the suffragists for the women in Maine.

Various meetings were held each year in different localities around the State. Some were held in conjunction with or under the auspices of the New England Suffrage Association. "Friends of the Cause" were earnestly invited to attend. The members of the State organization hoped to recruit new members, publicize their principles, and strengthen their association so that political rights could be secured for those women who wished to exercise them. These meetings proved to be highly successful. Before the turn of the century, formation of local suffrage leagues or clubs had taken place in Augusta, Saco, Waterville, Hampden, Old Orchard, Skowhegan, Auburn, Machias, and in Hancock county.9

7 A variety of articles catalogued in the League of Women Voters Collection, 1871-1912.
8 League of Women Voters Collection, "Progress of the Nineteenth Century Woman," 1901.
The State organization was successful in enlisting advocates to their cause and in the next few years, continued to promote support and passage of the measure. There was a variety of ways the idea was presented. The Association tried to utilize the media whenever they could do so but also relied upon innovative acts to draw attention to the issue. One method was the development of a day totally devoted to suffrage ideals.

In 1900, this Suffrage Day was established at Ocean Park, Old Orchard Beach and became a tradition for the next twenty years as a "red-letter" day in which to espouse suffrage ideals. It proved to be a highly effective means to increase the public's awareness of enfranchisement and its impact for women.

The movement towards women's suffrage seemed to rise to greater proportions in the early part of the 1900's. Throughout the rest of the decade, the State league was concerned with setting up as many organizations as they could across the State. As these organizations were formed, however, greater attention was paid to the issue and as it became more pronounced, the negative sentiment grew also. The State soon became the focus of greater national attention as the question loomed, "Will Maine grant women the right to vote?"
The increased attention was symbolized by an increase in press coverage. The papers filled with letters debating the pros and cons of the issue as well as articles devoted to reporting the activities of both sides. These activities encompassed a wide realm of ideas destined to influence people one way or another.

One example of this can be found in an article dated February 29, 1905, entitled "A Session Like of Which was Never Seen Before." The article began with the line, "Unique in the history of legislative sessions was the hearing given this afternoon by the committee on judiciary to grant women the right of suffrage."\(^{10}\) The hearing began with several petitioners outlining the many years of dedication that had been devoted to the cause. This was followed by several women delivering persuasive speeches for passage of the suffrage amendment. These arguments focused upon the State motto of "Dirigo"\(^{11}\) and how it seemed an ill-fitting motto for a State which had proved so tardy on the matter of granting half its citizens the right to vote. They attacked the "petty" arguments which men had relied upon in the past to keep women in their place and questioned the assumption that women were adequately represented by their husbands or fathers.

\(^{10}\) League of Women Voters Collection, "A Session Like of Which was Never Seen Before," February 29, 1905.

\(^{11}\) The Latin translation of the State motto is "I Lead."
Those women representing the anti-suffrage sentiment were allowed an opportunity to address the hearing and were described in great detail. One woman appeared "overcome with embarrassment" and "shed a tear in a very large and very red handkerchief" before she proceeded with her argument. Another was described as "very witty" and created no end of amusement for the spectators. These women argued that men were superior beings, that the emotional character of woman was unfitting for her to fulfill public duties and that to grant suffrage to women would but double the number of voters who would not be fitted to vote.

The article reported that after some debate the committee voted to report favorably on the proposed amendment and after lots of cheering, the hearing was ended.

Rather than a true account, this article was written about the "very amusing and novel entertainment arranged by the Woman Suffrage Club of Portland." This was one manner the Maine association used to broadcast their message. Not only was the "entertainment" deemed as successful with a very large gathering in attendance but the article served the purpose of letting a larger audience read and realize the inherent message.

Another thing that the group tried to accomplish through their play-acting was the chance to dispell some of

12 *League of Women Voters Collection, "A Session Like of Which was Never Seen Before,"* February 29, 1905.
the myths that were circulating at the time about the suffrage movement and the women involved with it. This was an enlightening way in which to show the general public that woman suffrage had persuasive and valid arguments compared to the justifications of the anti-suffragists.

However, this method was not only employed by the suffragists, as another account tells about a meeting of the Maine Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage.

Miss Ogden in an unusually clever and witty address compared a community, wherein equal suffrage held sway, to an orchestra anxious to play the same part...Miss Ogden's musical ability as well as her rare wit made her particularly fitted to carry out this clever satire and she produced not only a pleasing impression but beneath her witty illusions there was a fund of real value as showing the necessity for a division of labor and influence to make up the great hole in any community.14

After 1910, another method which the suffragists used effectively was the organizing of an interest march. Many marches were held throughout the State in honor of various occasions. One favorite occasion was the celebration of Susan B. Anthony's birthday. Another was the annual march on the State House in Augusta. These marches were used to draw attention to the hearings held by the Legislature asking them to pass a bill requiring the submission of an equal suffrage amendment to the voters of the State. These marches proved to be great rallying efforts and the women

14 League of Women Voters Collection, "Anti-Suffrage Association Holds its Meeting," no date available.
often dressed for the event, sporting yellow flowers and items of yellow clothes to signify support for the measure. Again, the anti-suffragists often sponsored counter marches wearing red colors to represent their feelings.

The proponents and opponents were always highly successful in turning out numbers to attend events. As the events received greater attention, the press coverage increased proportionately. Whether or not the coverage was beneficial to the suffragists or anti-suffragists was another matter debated.

The increase in media coverage was held directly attributable for the advances made for equal suffrage by Helen N. Bates, president of the Maine Association in October, 1913. She felt that the issue was one that no longer could be denied and that the press had helped to bring the association in touch "...with people from widely separated localities, many of whom have never had the subject brought definitely to them before."15 In the same article, Susan Walker Fitzgerald made the observation that the press had finally realized that woman suffrage was a "live" issue which did not necessarily affect women only and could no longer be ignored by anyone who had an active interest in public affairs.

15 League of Women Voters Collection, "It's Coming. Maine Women Bound to Get Right to Vote," October 31, 1913.
One fact that the suffragists could not dispute, however, was that each time the measure was brought before the Legislature, it ended in defeat. The anti-suffrage sentiment was the reigning one year after year and the opponents to the issue used these victories to indicate that the majority of people who did have knowledge about suffrage were not supportive of it.

The suffragists, however, were determined to persevere and use their collective forces. One article in particular emphasized this point:

It was an earnest thoughtful body of optimistic women that attended the sessions of the Maine Equal Suffrage Association, this past week. They expressed themselves as confident that woman suffrage was sure to come and before long. The discussions showed that they had made a careful study of their cause and were competent to present it in a most succinct and intelligent manner. Their sessions were models of parliamentary procedure and the addresses and discussions were intensely interesting and listened to with marked attention by this band of enthusiastic advocates of equal suffrage, laboring sincerely and earnestly for the right of women to the ballot.¹⁶

Earnest determination paid off as the issue remained a volatile one throughout the 1900's. Newspaper accounts between the years 1912 and 1919 showed that these years were crucial to the suffrage question.

A report summarizing the legislative action of 1912 on the suffrage amendment, said that the Maine Senate had voted

¹⁶ *League of Women Voters Collection, no title, October 31, 1913.*
the measure down by a vote of ten ayes to 15 nays. The House, had 70 members voting in favor and 66 opposed. Unfortunately, this was not enough to pass the measure with the two-thirds majority required. 17

The prospects for 1913 were more promising as an article said that the suffragists seemed to be in a better position that year, because they had the overwhelming support from the State Grange, the W.C.T.U., the Progressive party and platform promises from both the Democrats and Republicans. 18 With the opening of the debate in the 1913 legislative session, George H. Allan was one of the spokesmen for woman suffrage before the House Judiciary committee. His argument centered around the declaration that voting was not a divine right of man, that women were of high moral character as well as law-abiding and would have much to add to the general welfare of the state. Helen N. Bates supported these arguments and added,

The theory of equal suffrage is one whose justice few people dare to question today. If the just power of a government is based upon the consent of the governed then so long as women are bound by the law, are governed by the public machinery, that government is not just unless it is based upon their consent as well as that of men. It is hard to see how we can claim we are living in a land of freedom and liberty when our government is that of the whole people by one-half of the people. 19

17 League of Women Voters Collection, no title, January 1913.
19 League of Women Voters Collection, no title, February 1913.
These arguments proved persuasive enough for the Judiciary committee to vote unanimously that the amendment ought to pass.

The *Portland Press Herald* in an article dated the following day paid tribute to the many women who spoke on behalf of suffrage rights. "What if they did not have banners and skyrockets and other fireworks? They were armed with much more effective weapons. They had well-prepared speeches, short and concise. They presented a cohort of oratorical women who fired argumentative projectiles into the ranks of the theoretical opposition." 20

The same women also appeared before the Senate Hearing on February 19, 1913. They were aided this time by an argument from Senator Hersey. He asked the members present if women were totally like men in composition of brains and other organs. If so, he debated, then women deserved the vote. If not, then he did not think that men were capable of voting for them. He spoke on the great attention that had been paid the issue, the contributions that women had made to American life and the advances women had made as well as the "unfairity of the entire issue." He ended with the plea,

She begs of you not to ridicule her further but to let her have in the battle of life, the same weapons of defense that you possess, to let her stand and work by your side, your equal, your companion. She

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asks only and simply, justice." 21

The Senate hearing voted 23 in favor of passage and six opposed.

However, when the measure reached the full House on February 27th, the anti-suffragists had had time to prepare and to find a willing advocate for their cause. The first motion on the issue to "indefinitely postpone" the measure was introduced by Representative Newbert. This was defeated by a vote of 88-50. Representative Newbert then took the floor and spoke at great length on the issue. The text of his speech was quite remarkable:

A stranger to our planet would gather the idea that sometime in the prehistoric ages brutal man had enslaved a fair race called woman, that this race was just coming out of awful bondage and that the great liberation was the ballot...

When woman takes refuge in logic and argument in such a cause as this, she overthrows the cumulative spiritual forces of the centuries which have brought her to the high place she today occupies and made her both woman and mother...

Especially do I speak for the old-fashioned woman. She needs a champion at this hour lest she be forgotten. Who is she?...She knows her woman's life and lives it. She sees the nearby duty in the day's routine and performs it. She perceives the well-worn paths of the simple life, and therein chooses to walk.

The old-fashioned woman is not seeking the ballot. She does not want it and shrinks from the new burdens and grave responsibilities that go with it. The old-fashioned woman is our typical Maine woman...You will find the old-fashioned woman when you find the mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters of Maine today. 22

21 League of Women Voters Collection, no title, February 19, 1913.

22 League of Women Voters Collection, "Representative Newbert Pleads for Old-fashioned Woman who Doesn't Want to
The interesting thing to note about the conclusion of Representative Newbert's case was that he ended by saying that since the issue concerned women, only women should vote upon whether or not they should receive the right to vote. This could be construed as a contradiction in terms in that the premise was women were unable to vote upon matters directly or indirectly related to them.

Representative Newbert was also backed up by a petition submitted by anti-suffrage leaders against passage of the resolution. On March 5, 1913, the House defeated the referendum by a vote of 89 to 53. The antis had won.23

This month-long debate brought to the forefront those women who felt strongly one way or another on the issue. The Maine Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage began organizing members in earnest. Their first formal meeting of 1913 was held in March at the Columbia Hotel in Portland. Mrs. A.J. George spoke on the need to act immediately as there was no need for a double electorate and that they, as a group, should be concerned with women's business of being "specialists as women." She felt that women had more important things to do than vote, that preserving the ideals of American life could not be accomplished by granting women the ballot, and that women should concentrate instead on

23 League of Women Voters Collection, "Democrats Defeat...Woman Suffrage in the Maine House," March 5, 1913.
shaping the coming generation. 24

Although the opposition's organization seemed to be gaining popularity in terms of numbers and their ability to sway some crucial votes, the defeat in the Legislature was not considered a serious setback to the crusaders for the vote. Instead, by the following year, two new groups were formed to aid the campaign. One was the College Equal Suffrage League composed of young college women who were all interested in the cause. The other was the Men's Suffrage League formed to organize those men who believed that women were entitled to the franchise as much as they were.

The year 1914 also marked an increase in membership for suffragists, a tremendous awakening of interest, and endorsement of the amendment by more organizations throughout the State. The amendment did not come before the Legislature during their second legislative session but the women used this time to recruit and publicize their beliefs. It seemed that many women who were originally opposed or indifferent to the struggle, once involved, became fervent advocates of the cause. One particular article captured this "about face" attitude in a published list of the "Seven Stages of a Suffragist."

1. It doesn't interest me.
2. I don't care if women get the vote or not.
3. It's most amusing how much suffragists care about a little thing.

4. I haven't the time to vote anyway.
5. Oh, I know it's bound to come.
6. I'm on the fence.
7. Suffragist? Yes indeed, I couldn't be anything else, been one for 40 years. Guess I was born one.

The Maine Association for Woman Suffrage did as much as they could to influence those people who had, at first, been indifferent to the issue. The association needed the support of as many people as possible. Helen Bates reiterated this idea at the annual meeting of the MASW.

It matters not whether the women asking for their rights be few or many, government cannot afford to be unjust to a single person. If only one woman demands the ballot, and is denied, it is an act of oppression and tyranny, which disgraces the government.

The association tried a variety of ways to become more visible to the public. Different members would periodically hold open-house teas for the purpose of introducing new members and distributing information. Also, booths were set up in local department stores for the same purpose - to have the information readily available and to recruit members to the cause. Department stores also attractively showed displays of the United States suffrage map and lists of the organizations endorsing it.

At the beginning of the 1915 legislative session, there was standing room only in the House chamber with yellow and

25 *League of Women Voters Collection*, no title, no date.
crimson banners and flowers prominently displayed as the proposal to submit the amendment to the voters of the State was debated. Each side was allowed one hour to present their case and allowed one half hour for rebuttal. The report stated that "...the debate was orderly and on both sides showed evidence of careful preparation." The proposal needed 98 votes to pass and just fell short of the two-thirds majority by ten votes. For another two years the resolve was defeated.

Although the resolve was defeated, once more the people involved were not. In April, 1915, a photoplay traveled throughout the State entitled "Your Girl and Mine." It was a melodrama staged and performed by the National association and dealt with States laws that discriminated unjustly against women. It received favorable reactions throughout the State.28

The women also used this time to promote different tactics to publicize the measure. In December 1915, many women took part in "voiceless speeches." They stood at streetcorners and passed out leaflets which clearly and concisely presented different views on the issues and all the reasons why women should be granted the right to vote. Some of the leaflets distributed were entitled: First Aid to

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These pamphlets were direct and to the point, completely investigating various areas of women's lives that would be affected by the right to vote and trying to provide factual, persuasive information for women to utilize in their decision-making.

The Maine Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage tried to adopt the same technique. However, their examples were very lengthy and oftentimes strayed from the immediate argument by quoting historical, vague personalities. Also, although the title was clearly enlarged and said, "Against Woman Suffrage," these hand-outs lacked the bold print and effective advertising of the counter arguments.

The issue finally came to the forefront in 1917 as the suffragists once again scheduled hearings for a referendum vote in the Legislature. The date was set for the hearing and both sides were confident that they would be victorious. This time, the issue stirred up more reaction than ever documented before. The papers were filled with letters

\textsuperscript{29} See Appendix 2.
submitted by readers venting their opinions, responses to prior writings, and the vehement reactions that individuals had.

The eyes of the world were on Maine to see whether she would be true to her motto and lead the Eastern States in giving full suffrage to women. As Gail Laughlin stated,

For after all, what is at stake at this election is not only the political liberty of women, but the honor and standing of Maine before the world... are the men of Maine just and fair-minded?...Is Maine to range herself with the modern progressive States which, with their eyes toward the future, stand for a real democracy, for a government in which those who are governed have a voice in their own government? Or is Maine to be classed...with those governments whose eyes are turned backward?30

Other letters written to the "Letter Box" of the Portland Express Advertiser echoed this opinion saying that Maine did not wish to trail at the end of the suffrage procession but should be the first to bring true democracy to the Eastern seaboard.

The anti-sentiment was represented in full force also. The opponents of the measure brought forth their arguments concentrating on the fact that the "Creator" had wisely adopted each sex to the "proper performance" of the duties of each, that the ballot was not a natural or inherent right and women did not possess the "physical power" to enforce their decisions, that the rights of women had been reason-

30 League of Women Voters Collection, "Gail Laughlin Writes on Suffrage Vote," September 8, 1917.
ably guarded, and that with no political prizes to gain or offices to win, women had no need for the ballot.

Carrie Chapman Catt seemed to express it best when she said, "There are no longer any real arguments against woman suffrage, there are only excuses."31 After over 30 years, the advocates of woman suffrage in the State of Maine secured the passage by the Legislature providing the submission of a suffrage amendment to popular vote. The Senate, acting in concurrence with the House, passed unanimously a resolution for a special election on September 10, 1917, to act on the adoption of a (State) constitutional amendment granting women the right to vote.

On September 10, 1917, the referendum failed in the popular election by a vote of 38,838 to 23,604.32 The suffragists were defeated in their first outright bid to allow the women of the state to vote. Many people assumed that the issue was dead but the initiative among the crusaders was not. They continued to broadcast their ideals and during the next legislative session, the amendment was proposed again. This amendment asked for women to have the right to vote in presidential elections. It passed the State Legislature on March 28, 1919. The referendum vote was submitted to the popular electorate and passed overwhelmingly on

31 League of Women Voters Collection, "Excuses Only," no date.
32 Figures quoted from the files of the Law and Legislative Library, State House, Augusta, Maine.
September 19, 1920. The vote was 88,657 in favor and 30,462 opposed. Woman suffrage had finally ruled. The last act guaranteeing women their right to the vote occurred on November 5, 1919 when both the House and the Senate approved ratification of the Constitutional amendment.

Nation-wide ratification of the Nineteenth amendment did not occur until August 26, 1920. However, Maine had the distinction of having both the first women to register and the first women to vote after this Constitutional amendment passed. Special proceedings were set up by the Legislature on August 31, 1920 for women to register for the September 13th State election. Within one week, Portland had registered 6,685 women. There was some discrepancy about the first woman registered as both Bangor and Lewiston claimed that they had registered the first. State officials later ruled that it had been a tie and Gertrude Southard and Alice Skolfield got the honors. They joined the thousands of women who voted in the State election and ended a 70-year battle for equal voting rights.

**Conclusion**

The important thing to look at during this entire period was the concrete impact that the experience had on the women of Maine. One of the things that stood out was

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the sheer devotion or commitment to either side of the cause that these women exhibited. Another was the political expertise that these women gained because of their intense involvement with the political scheme. Both proponents and anti-suffragists displayed remarkable political skills in their methods, speeches, techniques, and printed materials. Each side had a cause and a campaign and carried out their work to the best of their ability. This expertise led the way for women to participate in politics at some level or to run for political office. Maine was fortunate to have such close ties with the National organizations because of the knowledge they gained and materials they used. However, no one can question that it was the women of Maine who fought through the political red-tape and achieved their long sought after goal.

THE FIRST PHASE 1920-1940

With the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, those who had worked for its ratification hoped that women would use their new political right to the best of their ability. As William Chafe said, "The suffragists had good reason to believe that they had scored a decisive victory in the battle for women's rights. In effect, the ballot had come to symbolize the entire struggle for equality and to embody all the demands of the women's movement."36

There was an assumption that had been tendered during the long quest for woman's rights that women would act as a cohesive force in the electorate. Suffragists had proposed that women could vote as a separate block to bring about social change. As the decade progressed, however, women failed to exercise their right to the franchise in substantial proportions. There was also a lack of evidence that women voted any differently from men. "In general women voted according to their social and economic backgrounds and the political preference of their husbands rather than according to their sex." 31

As the decade progressed, most women exhibited a general lack of interest in politics, others blamed ignorance of the balloting and political process, some executed their disbelief in woman's right to the vote and others continued to defer to men to represent their interests. Some women focused upon their absorption in homemaking and their reluctance to break from the conventional mode. The singular most popular issue seemed, however, that there was a lack of a dramatic women's issue or any issue for women to focus their attention upon. "A high degree of political participation...depends on the presence of group pressures emphasizing the importance of the ballot, and the absence of cross-pressures discouraging political independence. In the case of women, each variable worked against their voting in

the same proportions as men."38

By the mid 1920's, it was fairly obvious that women were not acting in the cohesive and committed manner which suffragists had predicted and instead of a political revolution, the Nineteenth Amendment seemed, at best, classifiable as a "reform".

This did not mean, however, that all women neglected to utilize their newly recognized status. Many women did participate actively within the political mechanism - some felt committed to voting as their principles dictated and many took advantage of the avenues available for female participation. These opportunities included such political aspirations as: running for political office at the local, state and national levels, involvement in clubs and organizations concerned with women's rights and issues, and participation in any manner within the political system.

Maine Women Enter the Scenario

Throughout the 1920's and 30's, there was a continual increase in the number of women who looked to club activities and public offices as their means to acquire exposure to the political arena. In 1921, there were only 31 women in State legislatures nation-wide.39 Maine, however, was one of these States as Dora Pinkham, of Fort Kent, was the first woman elected to the State House of Representatives. She

38 Ibid.
39 Jane Jaquette, Women in Politics, 1974, pg. 76.
served two terms in the House and one in the Senate. She was joined by Katharine Allan of Hampden in 1927 and within the next few years, several other women joined the ranks.

By 1931, there were 149 women sitting in 39 State legislative seats. Although this figure represented a relatively low percentage of all the people serving in the Legislatures at that time, this report continued by stating that of these 149, sixty-four were serving in the "reputedly conservative New England States." It also praised the involvement of the women in this area and the progressive attitude that the voters in these states exhibited. "There is the suggestion that perhaps the New England States are not quite so slow, so unresponsive to the spirit of our times and reactionary with respect to the emancipation of the sex...in recognition of the ability to make acceptable public servants, they appear to lead the Nation."41

Maine, however, could not necessarily be classed in this declaration of leading the Nation in terms of women public office holders. Connecticut had the highest number of women participants with twenty-one, New Hampshire had eighteen, and Vermont had sixteen.42 Maine only had five women in office that year and the number never went higher.

40 Ibid. pg. 76.
42 Ibid.
than eight women members in the following two decades. Although Maine had a state motto which declared the state to "lead," in this instance, Maine was far behind.

Even though there were not a high number of women serving in the State House during this time, those women who did serve were completely immersed in the political process, and women who did not seek higher office, found other means to satisfy their urges for political participation.

The Women Legislators: Personal Characteristics

Between 1920 and 1940, twenty-four women served one term or more in the State Legislature. Thirty per cent of the women were single and those who were married had children. The average age, at the time of election, was forty years. There was no geographic proximity to the State House as the women came from all localities: Lewiston, Fairfield, Portland, Gorham, Bethel, Bangor and Old Town, were represented by female legislators and two members came from Van Buren and Fort Kent. All had high school educations and 25 per cent had some college training. The most frequently listed employment was teaching, but there were also telephone operators, treasurers and secretaries, as well as homemakers.

All these women had one thing in common, however. Each of the women had an active background in club activities or

43 State House Library File, "Women Members of the Maine Legislature,"
were involved in some sort of organizational membership. The clubs that these women were involved in displayed a variety of interests. The predominant type of club was the town or local Women's Club. After this, women were involved in organizations connected with everything from health care and care for the aged to membership in the State Grange. The characteristics of these clubs seemed to reflect the variety of areas that women had entered. Another common factor was that many of these women were presidents or directors of their respective clubs. The skills gained within these organizations carried over and assisted them in their political positions. Jane Cullan Killroy, a Representative who served between 1935 and 1937, said, "I think that sort of work has given me good self-discipline. It also gave me a background for politics." 44

The Women Legislators: Political Experience

Some of these women also had local experience to rely upon in their role as legislators. Most were members of their local party committees, some were active in the women's clubs of each respective party and several had been town committee members.

There was relatively little information available about these women and their legislative experience while in office. The Legislative Record, a compilation of

committees, acts, resolves, remarks, motions, speeches of the Maine Legislature, showed virtually no entries for the women members other than their rank in the hierarchy of committee structures. Women were predominantly assigned to the lesser committees or those dealing with general social welfare. Few women ever sponsored bills or any legislation.

Marion Martin was one of the few exceptions. She served two terms each in the House and the Senate between 1931 and 1939. When asked about her legislative record, she replied that she was proudest of her comprehensive occupational safety laws and the women and child welfare laws which were passed while she was in office. Her attitude about women's place in politics was fairly representative of these decades as she said that women should be seen and not heard.

A woman in this field who doesn't appreciate her asset is making a mistake. By just being herself - not trying to be like a man - she can make things pleasanter and get around problems of semantics that are keeping two sides apart...A woman shouldn't be competitive, yes, she can be in getting a man's attention, but not in trying to establish a place for herself.

Although women legislators were not highly visible in the political scene, their very presence opened the way for other women to seek higher office. These women were also

45 State House Clipping Collection, no title, February 1939.
characteristic of the increased acceptance of women within the political realm. Some parallels can be drawn between the women legislators and other women who sought different routes to political participation.

Another Outlet - The League of Women Voters

The National League of Women Voters was formed in 1919 to provide organizational leadership for the newly enfranchised citizens. The National League tried to instruct women in the tasks of citizenship so that they could work more effectively within existing political organizations and provide some women with guidelines for further involvement within these organizations. Maine founded its own State chapter of the League and several local chapters were formed immediately. The organization was primarily founded by those women previously involved in the Maine Woman Suffrage Association. The LWV provided an outlet for these women and newcomers to continue working in a direction that they were interested in and allowed them a means to express themselves and participate actively in a political atmosphere.

The Maine LWV followed the National predisposition to sponsor candidate meeting sessions, make intensive studies of pertinent subjects in order that women voters could have a better knowledge on how to vote intelligently, and to explain the mechanics of voting and its implications, all in a non-partisan manner. The Maine League was started to provide education to the women who were confronted with the
need for political awareness following ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment. The women who were involved in the League were all interested in whatever contributions they could make. "The League believes that a continuing political education is essential to the success of a democracy, that citizens may have opinions based on facts and may, as voters, make these opinions effective." 46

Those women involved in the hierarchy of the League displayed similar characteristics to those serving in the Legislature. Mrs. Edward C. Hawes, president of the Bangor LWV in 1931, was involved in various local women's clubs, showed interest in certain women's and child welfare issues, was vice president for the Association for the Blind and on the Board of Directors for the YWCA. An article written about her election as president of the League said, "...(Mrs. Hawes) is well qualified to assume her new duties having had considerable executive ability and having organized and directed many organization..." 47 She felt that work and association with the LWV "...is a means of education for the women...along civic lines, which they should take up if interested in the affairs of the country, and the proper use of the ballot." 48

46 League of Women Voters Collection, no title, May 24, 1936.
47 League of Women Voters Collection, no title, December 28, 1931.
48 Ibid.
Two other women very involved in the LWV were Mrs. P.C. Savage and Mrs. Hershel Peabody. These women were alternately presidents of the State LWV throughout the decade of the thirties. Mrs. Savage declared the "science of government" as her hobby in one interview. She was a member of the American Association of University women, the Keynne Club, the Bangor Junior Welfare League, in addition to her work with the League. She said, "I joined the League first for a special interest...and after becoming a member found that many of the departments immediately caught and held my interest. Many women do not realize...the opportunities for study and mental stimulation." 49 She went on to say, "I am not interested in politics, but I am interested in government. My interest in the LWV is because it offers an intelligent approach to responsible participation in government." 50

Even though she did not care to pursue the routes to political involvement with an elective office, Mrs. Savage was able to channel her political interest in a different direction. She went on to become chairperson of the New England Regional LWV and then a National officer.

Mrs. Hershel Peabody was elected president of the State League after Mrs. Savage's promotion. She was also involved, as an associate general, with the YWCA and the

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49 League of Women Voters Collection, no title, April 1934.
50 Ibid.
AAUW. She had been involved in several organizations in the Bangor area prior to her League work. "Mrs. Peabody...is prominent in the civic and social life of the city. A woman with rare executive ability and a keen insight into the workings of the League is well equipped to assume her new duties." Both of these women exhibited traits which signified a high intensity of political proficiency and their leadership capabilities were indicative of the increasing skills and knowledge gained by women within the democratic system.

One other woman who should be mentioned is Maud Wood Park. Maud Park had been extremely active in the National LWV, having been the first president, before she moved to Portland. Once there, she became involved in the Portland League and demonstrated a renewed interest in League work. In 1932, she was elected Director of the Maine League. She helped the League's purpose by sponsoring and planning year round activities, promoting informational sessions, forming citizenry schools for people to learn about the main issues, and encouraging discussion and understanding of the political process, throughout the decade.

In 1938, at the annual National convention held in St. Louis, Missouri, Maud Park was one of the guests of honor. In an interview, she expressed "reasonable satisfaction"

51 League of Women Voters Collection, no title, May, 1934.
with the progress of the League and of women since ratification of the suffrage amendment. She continued by commenting upon women and their relationship to the political network.

Of course, one should never be completely satisfied with any accomplishment, and certainly we never anticipated that half of the voters could remake the universe...While it would be fair and of value to the country, I think it will be a long time before many women occupy these (public) offices. 52

Maud Wood Park was correct in her prediction that it would be a long time before more women entered the race for political positions. However, the experience of being a League member was beneficial. It allowed certain women the freedom to pursue political interest, allowed other women to gain the experience they needed to fulfill political goals, and lent valuable insight to those women who sought elective office.

WOMEN AND THE PEDASTAL 1940-1960

The decades to follow did not see an overwhelming increase in the number of women seeking higher office. In 1941, there were only 144 women holding legislative seats nation-wide. 53 This total reflected a slight decrease, over the previous decades and the actual number of women serving in politics did not change drastically until the late 1950's when there was a slight increase. Maine followed this pat-

53 Jacquette, op. cit., pg. 76.
tern; the average number of women in the Legislature between 1941-1955 was only eight and there was only a slight increase seen in the 1957 legislative session.

What accounts for this stagnant period in women's political history? One explanation was given by Betty Friedan in *The Feminine Mystique*. In her book she discussed the myth of fulfillment and how women in the 1940's had only one definition for their lives.

The Feminine Mystique says that the highest value and the only commitment for women is the fulfillment of their own femininity... The mistake, says the Mystique, the root of women's troubles in the past is that women envied men, women tried to be like men, instead of accepting their own nature, which can find fulfillment only in sexual passivity, male domination, and nurturing maternal love.54

This myth did seem to pervade throughout the decade of the forties and fifties. Not only were the women able to define themselves by it but every aspect of society seemed to reiterate the same principle: "...it was simply taken for granted and accepted as an immutable fact of life by writers, that women were not interested in politics...."55 The women of this time clearly exhibited this idea both in their thoughts and deeds.

**Women in Maine: Personal Characteristics**

Between 1940 and 1960, there was only an increase of twelve women in the State Legislature over the prior two years.

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55 Ibid, pg. 44
decades. These thirty-six women differed somewhat from those women who had first entered the State House. During this period, there was a ten per cent decrease in those women who served one of two terms and a ten percent increase in those women who served more than three terms. This change meant that although a low percentage of women were seeking state positions, those women who did serve tended to stay in their legislative seats for a longer period of time. There was a smaller percentage of single women but a larger number of widows present. Those women who did enter politics during this period seemed to be waiting longer in order to seek an office. The primary factor behind this was that most women waited until their children were grown or their husbands passed away. Bernice Hanson, who first served in 1951 and then returned in 1959, exemplified this phenomenon when she said, "Now that my children are all grown and away from home, I think it's my turn to give a few years in civic and governmental work."56 These women were also noticeably older than their predecessors - the average age for women serving in these decades was 51 at the time of election. Also, nearly 50 per cent of the women had formal training after high school, another increase from the previous women office holders.

These women were very involved in club activities and there was a large variety of interests displayed. Civic

56 State House Clipping Collection, Kennebec Journal, April 2, 1959.
activities included: members of the local Red Cross chapters, Health Association, the W.C.T.U., Children's Aid Societies, the LWV, Civil Defense Clubs, Library Associations, the Maine Federation of Women's Clubs, the Grange, Literary Unions, and Church organizations to name a few. These women served as county chairpersons, presidents, board members and managers for many of the activities that they were involved with. It was frequently recorded that someone was the "first" woman to head an organization or the "first" woman leader.

Maine Women: Political Experience

As far as prior political experience was concerned, many of these women had held a previous office at the local level. Most were members of their local town committee, several were school board members or town and city council members. Lucia Cormier was delegate to the Democratic National convention three times and was elected a Democratic National committeewoman in 1948, a post she held for eight years. In 1952, she was vice-chair of the platform committee. Ethel Baker, a two-term representative from Orrington, served as the town clerk in Orrington from 1931-1952 and described it as the "job that got her into politics." Minnie Knapp, a three term legislator, held a variety of local positions. She served as deputy sheriff, school committee member, police matron, health officer, town council member, justice of the peace, notary republic, town constable, and
appraiser for her town. Finally, Jane Cullan Killroy, who first served in 1939 and then returned to serve for eight more terms in 1959, had her start in politics as a Democratic party worker. She went on to be a delegate to the National Democratic convention and served as both a member and later vice-chair of the State Democratic committee before seeking her legislative seat.

Once in state office, these women continued to execute a commitment to their role as politicians. Augusta Christie never lost a day in attendance during her four terms in office. She served on the State Government Committee and chaired the Liquor Control Committee. One report had the following to say about her legislative work, "...she continues to battle the liquor interest with a charming blend of sturdy resolve and good humor."57 Another described her as, "...a gentle soft-spoken widow winning the respect of Maine lawmakers for her determined stand on alcohol...(she) isn't fanatical but adamant...a poised, experienced speaker, she presents her views sincerely, succinctly, and tactfully."58

Lucia Cormier was another woman who not only proved herself to be an able legislator but went on to further her political career after leaving the State House. While in the Legislature, however, she had an active interest in edu-

cation and not only served on the Education committee but
was a delegate to the White House Conference on Education in
1956, and secretary of the New England Board of Higher Edu-
cation. She was also the first woman to serve on the Leg-
islative Research Committee and the Advisory Budget Commit-
tee. More importantly, she was the first woman ever elected
to hold a leadership post in the Maine Legislature. In
1958, she was elected Minority Floor Leader of the House.
She was described as a "capable politician" as well as a
respected legislator" and known as an "energetic and intel-
ligent party leader."59 After a disappointing bid for a
congressional seat in 1960 she was appointed Collector of
Customs in Maine by President Kennedy. She was the first
woman in the nation to hold such a position and the
reported, "...Her reputation has grown among those Portland
Press Herald of both parties as she has demonstrated her
understanding and her fair-minded approach to legislative
and administrative problems."60

Hazel C. Lord had an outstanding legislative career
during this time. She served two terms in the House and
four terms in the Senate. She was a militant for improved
educational standards and opportunities and served as chair
of the Public Health committee and as a member of the Town
and Counties and Legal Affairs committees. She ran for the

59 State House Clipping Collection, Kennebec Journal, April 15, 1959.
60 State House Clipping Collection, Portland Press Herald, August 22, 1961.
Portland city council while a state senator as she saw a need for a closer liaison between city and state government. The *Portland Evening Express* said, "...as she seeks to become a member of the city's governing body, she is demonstrating the same good sense, thoroughness, and sense of balance which she has so long demonstrated in the Maine Legislature."61

Other prominent women during this time were Ethel Baker who served as chair of the Legal Affairs committee, Marguerite Smith who was the first woman to serve as House chair of the "powerful" legislative committee on Appropriations, Margaret Sproul, who served as chair of the Town and Counties committee, and Jane Cullan Killroy who served on seven different committees during her eight year reign.

Although these women were quite involved and successful in their roles as politicians, the attitude towards women in politics during this twenty year phase was very condescending compared to today's standards. There were continual references to women's rightful role and many articles not only placed these women on a pedestal but at certain points obviously considered them merely as women rather than women politicians.

The *Kennebec Journal* did a series of articles on women serving in the Legislature between 1955-1959. These feature

stories appeared on the "Woman's" page and often discussed such topics as favorite recipes and gardening techniques favored by these female politicians. This attitude seemed, however, to reflect the society at large as the women themselves often perpetuated the idea that they considered their work as legislators to be merely a "hobby." "My political career can best be described as a hobby," was the comment made by Lucia Cormier. Along similar lines, Hazel Lord was described in one article in the following manner, "Hazel counts her interest and participation in government as a full-time hobby."

The descriptions in the newspapers often used terms which concentrated on the legislators' sex and not their positions. Augusta Christie was a "lovely woman" who firmly disciplined herself with a daily routine of calisthenics. Ida Harrington was known as the "...pleasant senator...who quietly tends to her own business." The attitude toward women in politics as displayed by these women did not alter too much from this viewpoint either. "I believe femininity is a part of our make-up and anything unladylike doesn't get us anywhere..." were the

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62 State House Clipping Collection, Kennebec Journal, April 15, 1959.
63 State House Clipping Collection, Kennebec Journal, March 6, 1959.
64 State House Clipping Collection, Kennebec Journal, May 9, 1963.
words Lucia Cormier used in an article about her. Marguerite Smith spoke on woman's emancipation with the invention of modern conveniences as they allowed "...today's women the time to give to their society as well as their families." Jane Cullan Killroy spoke on the topic in some length. She said,

I feel that the women should sort of stay back and allow the men to go forward...I think men are the politicians. I find that most men are very well adapted to being in politics, and I think the woman politician can do a lot to help them...Your approach has a lot to do with it. Each day, as a woman, if you listen to the men, I think they place a lot of confidence in you, and in that way you become a better legislator." In an article written several years later, she added, "You don't need a Phd., but you do have to know how to meet people at their own level. Women have their own place in politics. They don't have to compete with men." 68

Conclusion

The question during these decades seemed to be Did women have their "own place in politics"? As can be observed in this period, women entered politics but at a gradual pace. Those women, in Maine, who were involved during this time, were satisfied with participating in local

66 State House Clipping Collection, Portland Evening Express, February, 1963.
68 State House Clipping Collection, Kennebec Journal, March 1, 1967.
level organizations which interested them. The women who did seek local or state offices did so only if they could combine their homelife with this political "interest." Many of the women who did seek higher office waited until their children were grown or they were widows. Once in office, women achieved a certain amount of success in their positions but the general attitude exhibited by both the women and society at the time was that politics was primarily a male domain that women entered only to fulfill a lifelong goal of political interest and involvement. The myth was alive.

THE MYTH LINGERS ON 1960-1970

The attitude towards women in politics did not seem to alter very much at least in the beginning of the 1960's. The Kennebec Journal opened an article dated June 1961 with, "The distaff side members of the 100th legislature were probably even more anxious than the men for the final gavel of the lengthy session. Many of them had yet undone spring housecleaning or some other postponed household chores." This evidence pointed out that women were not taken seriously in their roles as politicians. However, as the decade progressed, it was difficult not to notice the fact that there were differences among these women that set them apart from their predecessors.

Personal and Political Characteristics

During this decade, thirty-two women served, all of them were married, a totally different percentage than the earlier decades.

These women displayed the same club involvement and prior political experience as their predecessors. If anything, these women were even more involved at the local level. Esther Shaw, a two-term representative, was listed as a member of 15 organizations. Catherine Carswell, a one-term senator, was the member of "about twenty-five" civic, social, church, and charitable organizations. A "quick glance" through Alma Oakes activities showed her to be involved with:

The Governor's committee on Health and Welfare, Portland city and county committees, Governor's Highway Safety Committee, Women's Republican Club, chairman of Red Cross Grey Ladies, volunteer service, 20 years; past vice president and past president of Ralph D. Caldwell Auxiliary, American Legion; past president of Portland Business and Professional Women's Club; past president of Catherine McAuley Club; past president, The Holy Innocent Guild; vice president, Mercy Hospital Auxiliary; World War I Auxiliary; Daughters of Isabella, Pleasantdale Grange, Nathan Clifford PTA, and the Widows of Veteran Railroad Employees. 70

This club activity was one extension of political interest that women sought but women also gained increased involvement through other means. These women held many local positions as well as positions within the state party.

70 State House Clipping Collection, Kennebec Journal, no date.
structure which allowed them to remain active. Esther Shaw served on the school committee, kept active in local Republican circles, was a delegate to the Republican State convention for four years, and served as vice-chair of a gubernatorial campaign. Once in office she continued to lead a busy political life as she was chosen the House chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Towns and Counties.

Catherine Carswell said that her active interest in club life first introduced her to politics. "I guess people thought because I was so active that I might like to run for office." She also attributed her political succession to her husband who "encouraged" her participation and heartily approved of her activities.

This spousal approval seemed to be a key factor in many women's decisions to seek state offices and could possibly explain why married women were predominant during this decade. Louise Lincoln was depicted as a "...reluctant candidate, one of those people with no political ambitions who just can't seem to lose many elections." She said that her first involvement for the state seat came about because the town needed a Republican candidate. "With the family's help, I finally decided, why not? I ran and won...I really would have preferred to wait until my children were out of

71 State House Clipping Collection, Kennebec Journal, March 1959.
high school but opportunity knocks once." Her legislative years were unmarked by any "head-line making speeches or bills" but she did chair two of the committees of the legislature.

Alma Oake's husband, a "prominent" dairyman and an active party leader in Republican politics, was the person who first insisted she should actively engage herself in politics and urged her to become a ballot clerk. From that time on she was heavily involved in politics "but always for someone else." One account said that she was a diligent worker, cared about others and was always willing to do what she could in her community as well as in the Legislature.

Reta Baker, whose representative seat was the first public office that she had ever held or run for, explained, "I did not feel that I should run for office until I was sure I did not neglect my family and duties at home." Her husband was the "motivating" influence in her decision to run.

**Legislative Record**

Once in office, these women proved quite competent as they became members of influential committees or chairs of others. Their attitude toward their job differed slightly from those with previous legislative experience. During

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this time period, the women did not seem to concentrate as much on their role as a minority in a male-dominated realm. Instead, they took their positions seriously. Louise Lincoln called it a "marvelous education."75 Reta Baker said, "I find it interesting and challenging and did not feel the least bit out of place because of my sex."76 This idea about the sex of a candidate was still uppermost in most people's minds but the attitude towards women in politics, in general, was becoming gradually more acceptable in some cases. Marion Fuller Brown described her role as a female legislator and gave other women advice on entering politics.

To be a woman legislator, requires considerable study and effort if you are going to do a good job...and a pretty thick skin...I urge more women to consider politics because I think it is something they can do without going back for further education. They can make a real contribution to their community and the state as a whole. Often in their daily way of living they get to know the problems of their own community better than the men... 77

Mildred Wheeler said she was a candidate because she felt that women should take a more active part in politics. "The women's point in political matters offers a fresh approach into an area previously dominated by men."78 However, Christine Ruby expressed the feeling toward women seeking higher

75 State House Clipping Collection, Portland Evening Express, February, 1972.
77 State House Clipping Collection, Kennebec Journal, March 1967.
78 State House Clipping Collection, Portland Evening Express, March 1965.
political aspirations when she said, "I would love to be Speaker of the House but no one will ever see one of my own sex in that position." 79

**Conclusion**

This attitude could be attributed to the predominant theme of the decade. Although acceptance of women in politics was increasing, there was still the mode of thinking that implied women were not to be taken seriously in their roles as politicians. The articles written about these women would talk about their gardening techniques or "luscious" apple pies and would totally ignore the contributions that these women were making. With these attitudes prevalent during this decade, it was easy to understand why the lingering "myth" had an affect on women seeking political offices.

**THE NUMBERS GAME 1970-1980**

A remarkable increase in the number of women in politics occurred in the seventies. One account said that 1,198 women had filed for seats in the U.S. Congress and State Legislatures in 1974 - several hundred more than in 1972. 80 Another stated that between 1975-1979, the number of women

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The tides seemed to be turning. Not only were women increasingly entering politics during this decade but the whole attitude towards these women as well as their characteristics changed also. This attitude change was one that was sweeping the country. Some felt that it was reflexive of the women's movement and the increased attention paid to the Equal Rights Amendment. Both of these issues were at the height of their exposure in the early seventies. Throughout society, women were making advances and entering realms never tried before. These were both key issues of the seventies and reactions to these issues meant monumental changes for women and their place in society. Shirley Ezzy, chairperson of the Governor's Advisory Council on the Status of Women in Maine said, "I believe the women's movement has brought attention to women and opened up a desire for women to run in public life." Others did not know if the credit belonged to the women's movement or the ERA, but there was definitely a catalyst present that stimulated a larger number of women to run for political positions.

Another issue on the national political scene was the concern with the Watergate scandal. Jane McMichael, executive director of the National Women's Political Caucus, felt that the climate was right in 1974. "We're at a threshold

82 State House Clipping Collection, Bangor Daily News, March 8, 1976.
year - this is the beginning." 83 She felt that in some ways it had been advantageous for women to have been outside of the political process throughout the Watergate crisis. "Not only were no women involved in the scandal but they may also not be as tarred by the antipolitician mood that Watergate has generated." 84 Peter Hart, a national pollster, reemphasized this feeling when he said, "Women are definitely helped by the honesty issue. Every time we ask who is more honest, men or women, a plurality will say women." 85

This phenomenon was explained by Susan and Martin Tolchin in Clout: Womanpower and Politics. They implied that the increase of women in politics was due to the records, achievements, and efforts of the women who had been serving in political capacities in the past.

This barring of women from mainstream politics and the councils of government is now being challenged by increasing numbers of women who have sought and won elective posts in city halls and statehouses, and begun to build their own political bases...their power is clearly on the rise. 86

You've Come a Long Way, Baby

Were the women in the seventies "on the rise"? Had they "come a long way"? If so, in what ways were they different from their predecessors and how did they get to that

84 Ibid.
85 Ibid.
86 Susan and Martin Tolchin, Clout: Womanpower and Politics, 1974, pg. 7.
point? In the early seventies, several works were published focusing on the issue of women in politics for the first time. These studies took a closer look at the national perspective and provided valuable information about the current involvement of women politicians. The major issues investigated were: the personal and political characteristics of the women, the implications for women in society, patterns of officeholding, and the mechanisms women used to seek office.

One of these studies was compiled by the Center for the American Woman and Politics at the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers in 1976. This analysis concentrated on women who had served or were presently serving in political positions. The study tried to discover whether or not women politicians were a "strange" breed and if not, if they were similar to other women.

It was discovered that political women often came from political families or from families which had had some political interest in the past. The woman politician was also slightly older and better educated than the general population.

Family life was discovered to be an inhibitor of the public activity of women, but were not necessarily impediments to a political career. Political women were as likely as other women to be married and no more likely to be single, widowed, or divorced. The husbands of women
represented a facilitating source for, rather than a hindrance to, public participation. The number and age of children was not found to preclude participation in politics. 87

Another area that was closely looked at was the organizational affiliations that women politicians had. The number and type of organizations differed from woman to woman but the overwhelming majority of women were members of a vast range of organizations. 88 The highest frequency of similar organizations was found among those with a political basis. These organizations included: the LWV, NOW, Democratic and Republican clubs and other local and state-wide citizen groups. These groups memberships were found to be instrumental in providing information about decision-making and political processes. There was also a high incidence of women's groups represented also. 89

The national statistics on political experience and characteristics showed that the majority of women in office were newcomers, that they were far more likely to be Democrats, that they had some party position or office at the local level, and that many had held an elective or appointive position of some kind in the past. Women served on all types of committees once elected but were found to be heavily concentrated in the health, education, welfare and

"good" government areas.\textsuperscript{90}

The conclusion of the study focused on the premise that women were not well integrated with the political life and this imbalance in the participation of women should be corrected. There was little evidence that the "political woman" was a special type of person distinguishable from the other women in the population. Rather, they signified the possibility of a "new woman" emerging in politics. \textsuperscript{91}

\textbf{Maine's New Numbers}

In 1974, a record 55 Maine women ran for state and federal office, demonstrating that more women were motivated to become involved in public office. As the \textit{Bangor Daily News} said, "Women see important issues coming up and want to be a part of it...The door has been opened and women are facing the challenge head on."\textsuperscript{92} Whatever the reason, it paid off in the 1974 elections. There was a net increase of five women in the Maine Legislature bringing the total to 23 Representatives. This increase was consistent with the nation-wide results and proof that the trend of electing more women to law making posts had officially taken roots.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[90] Ibid, pg. xxxviii.
\item[91] Ibid, pg. xlvii.
\item[92] State House Clipping Collection, \textit{Bangor Daily News}, May 18, 1974.
\end{footnotes}
Prior Experiences and Motivations for Entering

These women were still coming from a background that included serving in local and county offices as well as other posts throughout the State political party structure. Many women attributed their new strong political interest as representative of the increased involvement of women across the country. Minnette Cummings, the only woman senator serving at the time, said, "There's been a general attitude change and women are beginning to see that they can participate."93

Joyce Lewis and Mary Najarian, two representatives, felt that women had a chance to accomplish some meaningful achievements at the grass roots level. They encouraged more women to get involved as the future for women politicians was getting brighter especially as more women became informed and aware of the political process. They compared the statistics of the 1975 elections between men and women being reelected. Of the 12 women who ran for re-election, eleven won. For the 95 men who ran for an additional term, only 65 were victorious. Mary Najarian lent support to the Tolchins' argument by stating, "Those women out front have won the respect of both men and women, and respect is the name of the game."94 However, both women expressed the

thought that the struggle for acceptance would remain an uphill struggle.

This struggle was typified in an UPI article printed in the Maine Sunday Telegram, in 1975. The article was entitled, "Analyst Reveals Women Losing Battle of the Ballot" and Hal Evry, the analyst, described how poorly women were doing in the election realm. He started by listing the few numbers of women that were serving in various political offices throughout the United States. In one example he said that the California Legislature, with a ratio of three women in the 165-person body, was "exactly typical of all the States." He continued:

This is paradoxical indeed when you realize that more than half the magazines on newsstands are devoted exclusively to women and that 90 per cent of all day time television is geared to women and that women cast 53 per cent of all privately owned stock in U.S. corporations and they are beneficiaries of 80 per cent of all privately held life insurance. What's more, they live seven years longer than men.

When asked his opinion on why so few women seek and are elected to public office, Evry said that most women responded that politics were primarily a man's arena, and that men held women down when they seek public office. His own opinion differed as he called these comments "excuses and pure hogwash." His own views on the matter were:

96 Ibid.
Women are more parsimonious than men. They think in terms of shopping supermarkets rather than committing money for time and space in television advertising and other media.

Women tend to listen more to their personal friends rather than to professionals who know how to direct a campaign.

Women look upon political campaigns as one coffee klatch after another and ignore the vast majority of voters who never attend such functions.

Many women who have risen to the top in local political party clubs have clawed and fussed their way up the ladder and they acquire and abrasiveness that alienates both men and women.

There are few women incumbents and incumbents win 95 per cent of all elections regardless of office, party, or sex. 97

Maine women did not account for much of Evry's analysis. By 1975, women comprised 15.3 per cent of the State Legislature, a considerable difference from the 1.8 per cent displayed in the California State House. Also, women in Maine were vastly increasing their numbers as incumbents were re-elected and more women were seeking office. The attitude toward women politicians in Maine underwent a minor change as women were portrayed in a more positive manner both by the media and by women in general.

Instead of the condescending portrayal of women politicians, the Maine papers began publishing articles focusing upon women's role in the political process and paid more
attention to the accomplishments of the women serving. The Portland Press Herald, in an article published in August, 1975, said, "Sincerity has always been the quality that has impressed us most about Representative Goodwin. She strikes us as the type of legislator who fights for a cause because she believes it's right or opposes an issue because she believes it's wrong. Her humanitarian instincts have guided much of her activity in the Legislature..."98 Kathleen Goodwin was elected in 1969 after being associated with various forms of state government and political activities for about 15 years. The article declaring her achievements was a far cry from the articles printed ten and twenty years before when women were evaluated on their recipes.

By 1976, 18 per cent of Maine's elected representatives were women. This was still higher than the national average of eight per cent and the State ranked third in the nation in terms of percentage of women office holders. Maine was therefore at the forefront of the 50 states when it came to the prominence of women in politics. Maine also set a record in that year as the only state to have women in leadership positions in both the House and the Senate at the same time. Senator Minnette Cummings was the first woman ever chosen as assistant majority leader in the Senate and Representative Mary Najarian was only the second woman to be chosen assistant majority leader in the House.

98 State House Clipping Collection, Portland Press Herald, August 1975.
Minnette Cummings was also the only woman in the all-male preserve. Yet, when asked if she felt uncomfortable or out of place, she replied that she was treated "just like and other senator." Another press release describing Mary Najarian said that she was "...at the center of all the legislative activity."

This surprising recognition of women's capability was an improvement over the inconsequential attitude toward women in Maine from the previous decades. The Portland Press Herald paid tribute to all the women serving in the State House when they wrote about the demise of the "weighty legislative matters" which had been traditionally assigned female legislators. These matters included everything from collecting money from other lawmakers for flowers and gifts, to selling tickets for the annual Spring Dance sponsored by the legislators to choosing a new color for the legislative license plates. The newspaper article also stated that the women had come a long way in commanding the respect involved in seeking and winning elective office.

Maine Women: Personal Characteristics

In accordance with the data from Women in Public Office, Maine women had incidences of political orientation

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99 State House Clipping Collection, no title, no date.
100 State House Clipping Collection, Portland Press Herald, March 1976.
in their familial lives, had prior political experience, and a continuing interest in a variety of clubs and organizations. These women were highly educated and came from a variety of societal backgrounds and occupations. Familial support was a key factor that women in the seventies considered before running for political office. Previously, women had waited until their children were grown before they entered the political fray. In this decade, however, somewhat younger women were seeking offices while their children were still young. Both Mary Najarian and Minnette Cummings said that their children and husbands were affected by their roles as legislators but that each of the husbands cared for the needs of the children and took on more responsibility in running the home. An article in the *Maine Sunday Telegram* emphasized this point when they investigated the complexities involved in making the decision to run for office. The considerations peculiar to a woman's decision were outlined by four incumbent politicians. The overwhelming opinion was that uppermost at the decision-making process was the family and the particular need for a supportive husband. The ages and school situation of children were other primary consideration as the heavy time commitment any political office represents was major. They also all agreed that divorce was more of a problem for women than men and often determined the election.102

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All of these factors were frequently used against women candidates by opposition, and the media. One article stated that when a man ran, the public assumed he could neglect his family but a woman was asked about the care for her children and whether or not the family would be able to absorb the experience. To counter these attacks, many women politicians began to use their household experience as an advantage. "Women are the doers, the natural listeners, the initiators, the arbitrators, the creators, the managers..." all skills that could be translated into talents for the Maine House or Senate. Mary Najarian said, "Aligning yourself with what you need to do, and adjusting and adapting accordingly, is the key..."103 Margaret Miscavage, another representative, also added her opinion towards women in politics. "You have to show people you are really able to roll with the punches."104

These women showed that they had learned how to roll with the punches and by 1977 Maine had kept its position as one of the States with the highest percentage of women in the legislature. Twenty-eight or 18 per cent of the House was comprised of women and Minnette Cummings was joined in the Senate by Olympia Snowe. The subject of women in Maine politics was paid increasing amounts of attention and each year more women were encouraged through various routes to seek elective positions.

103 Ibid.
104 Ibid.
During this decade, it was more frequent for the newspapers to address a woman legislator as an "intelligent, articulate woman" or an editor to recognize the potential of a woman legislator. Such was the case in Kathleen Goodwin's appointment as House Chair of the powerful Appropriations Committee.

House Speaker John Martin has chosen a legislator of uncommon ability to head one of the legislature's most influential panels...Representative Goodwin...has earned a deserved reputation as one of the most knowledgeable and hardworking members of the Maine House...She is a legislator who fights for what she believes regardless of its popularity, yet does so in a way which has brought her the trust and respect of legislative colleagues. No legislator in the past decade has worked more diligently or ably. In short, Speaker Martin could not have made a better choice for the House chairmanship...105

These comments endorse the fact that the attitudes toward women in politics were vastly changed in the decade of the seventies.

Another example of this change can be demonstrated by an article published in the Lewiston Journal which asked, "Is Maine Ready for Lady Governor?" In 1974, the possibility had arisen that Georgette Berube, a Lewiston representative, would possibly run in the gubernatorial campaign. The issue was readdressed in 1977. Representative Berube felt quite strongly that a woman could be a viable contender and could win. She qualified her statement by saying, 'Not any

woman, but a woman." 106 The article continued by stating, "The fact that a woman can be seriously interviewed on her prospects for the Blaine House... shows how far women have come in Maine." 107 Representative Berube also commented that when she first arrived at the legislature, women were given token privileges, like getting first choice of seats on the floor. "Women and the handicapped got first priority." 108 She felt that women were now accepted on a par as fellow colleagues and discrimination did not exist at an overt level. She also expressed her opinion that it would not be far removed when Maine would see a woman as Speaker of the House. "If a person had proven to be an effective legislator, there was no reason why a women could not be a fair governor or Speaker." 109

The end of the decade kept on the tradition of the beginning. In 1978, an all-time record of 34 women were elected to the Legislature. These women comprised 20 percent of the State House, more than double the national average of 9.2 percent. Jean Fallon, of the Maine Commission of Women, attributed this number as indicative of the fact that Maine voters did not discriminate against women. She expressed pleasure with the results but also said that it was not unanticipated because Maine had been at the

107 Ibid.
108 Ibid.
109 Ibid.
forefront for a number of years. A Portland Press Herald editorial was surprising in its appraisal. The editorial addressed the impression that for a state of such social conservatism, Maine was avant-garde in the one area of electing women to high offices. It called Maine's national standing "impressive" and said, "Maine voters are equal opportunity employers whose concern for ability outweighs any hangups over gender."\textsuperscript{110}

\textbf{Conclusion}

Not only were women more numerous at this time but extensive articles pointed out that these women could be classified as a "new breed." They were seen to be more logical, hard-working and serious about the issues than their male counterparts. They spent more time researching issues, contacting constituents, and staying on top of things. Robert Moore, a business lobbyist had this to say, "A greater percentage of them do their homework. Women take more issues seriously, are concerned, and not as cynical."\textsuperscript{111} This "new breed" also wanted to be looked upon as legislators not "women legislators."

This idea was carried over into one article outlining the prospects of women winning more offices in the 1978 elections. The article spoke of the statistics which showed


that women were becoming more of a force in Maine politics and, because there was a woman on the ballot in 44 of the State's districts, there was a likelihood that most would have a successful bid. Olympia Snowe emphasized the point that the public was very positive toward women running for major offices and they based their judgements on ability and past records, not sex. The article also pointed out that female legislators seemed to have no major differences, other than their sex, from their male colleagues. Another article reinforced this idea saying that there was "...no evidence that sex is a barrier to winning public office in Maine."

**WOMEN IN POWER**

A major breakthrough did occur in the 1970's as exhibited by the high number of women who competed for and won political offices. Throughout the decade, elected women more than doubled their numbers in State government positions from the previous years. Ruth Mandel, in her book, *In The Running*, calls the advances women had made as both remarkable and important. "Remarkable because for the first time significant numbers of women suddenly seem self-assured about achieving success in politics...and important for the impact on the changing self-concept and aspirations of women

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in general."¹¹³ The changing attitudes left the path clear for the eighties, and at the onslaught of this period women began forging ahead and increasing their political clout. At the national level, Carol Silverthorn, executive director of the National Women's Political Caucus, said, "The fact that women run for office is no longer an issue."¹¹⁴ After seventy long years of campaigning, pursuing, winning and holding offices, women could finally be recognized as having a role clearly defined within the political scheme. Maine was no different. As symbolized in the previous decades, Maine had been constantly at the forefront of the political scenario. The State continued to prove its capability of "leading" the nation as more women entered the political system and gained more power within this realm, power disproportionate to their numbers in office.

Maine's Women in Politics

The eighties began with a record number of women seeking State legislative seats. Of these 81 women, 42 were elected to represent their constituents in the 110th Maine Legislature, the highest number of women ever to be placed in this political position of power. Women now comprise nearly one quarter of the entire legislative body—a noticeable increase from previous decades. These 42 women place Maine as the fourth ranked State in terms of the

percentage of women serving in State Legislatures - 22.3 per cent of Maine's lawmakers are women compared to a national average of 10.3 per cent. 115 "I think Maine is probably one of the most progressive States in the Nation, despite the erroneous conceptions that out-of-staters have of us," was the comment from Senator Nancy Clark, a veteran legislator, in one interview.116 She cautioned, however, "We're still the missing half. We have a long way to go. We represent one-half the population and only 22 per cent of the seats." 117

**Personal and Political Characteristics**

These women differ slightly from the women who forged ahead of them. The average age of the present women legislators is 44 years at the time of election. Fifty-five per cent of the women are married while the other 45 per cent represents women who are heads of their respective households - single women, divorced women, and widows. Those women with children have entered politics when their children are slightly younger than previously determined and there are more young mothers serving than ever before. Several representatives, Libby Mitchell, Lorraine Chonko, and Mary Small have been pregnant while in office. 118

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116 *Ibid*.
117 *Ibid*.
118 Questionnaire results.
Most of the legislators gain their political experience from the same means as their predecessors. The elective offices which women have held include: mayoral candidates, city council members, county commissioners, and school board members. Prior appointive positions include: various State and local committees or commissions, councils and planning boards, and positions within the political parties. Interest is generated through such organizations as the League of Women Voters, other women's organizations, and involvement with political campaigns or issues.119

These women cite several reasons for deciding to run for elective office. Some are urged to run by friends or local party leaders, some feel it is their civic duty to contribute to society, and others wish to have the opportunity to affect the future of their family and community life.120 All these reasons point to the fact that women feel that they have a place in politics, that other people realize that women have a role in the political sphere and that there is a basic fairness on the part of Maine voters to give these women the chance to accomplish something as politicians.

Once in office, most of the women were proud of their accomplishments as legislators. These accomplishments usually center around legislation that they have initiated.

119 Ibid.
120 Ibid.
motivated, and/or sponsored. They feel that they have made significant legislative advances and are staunch in their support of certain legislation. Edwin Pert, Clerk of the House, reinforced this supposition when he said, "Women today are introducing more substantial legislation and shepharding these bills through. A significant number of women have learned how to work their bills...Hard work is the way you get bills through." Senator Clark also supported this observation:

Women sponsored almost one-half of all the bills in the 109th session and got more than half of their bills passed into law. The men sponsored a little more than half but got less than half of their bills enacted.

The attitude toward women in politics seems to have undergone a severe change compared to previous decades. Seventy-five per cent of the women feel that they do not experience sex discrimination in their positions and the remaining 25 per cent only feel "some". An overwhelming 90 per cent feel that they do not feel any discrimination from their constituents on account of their sex and most feel that other women and their male counterparts are all supportive of their role in the political system. Many of these women attributed the increase in acceptance as Senator Barbara Gill has the following opinion to add:

Sometimes women are treated with a little more

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respect initially but once we get involved in debating and committee work, we have to hold our own. If you can hold your own, if you know about what you're involved in, you gain the respect of your male colleagues. I've always had the feeling that I belonged. 123

Many of these women attribute the increase in acceptance as reflexive of the women's movement - the general conscious raising has had an affect on all facets of society and politics is no exception. 124

Therefore, the sex of a candidate does not seem to be an inhibiting factor for women in Maine's political culture. Seventy-five per cent of the women said that they don't emphasize or downplay their femininity and that they consider themselves individuals not "sex objects". Women feel that they are "competent individuals" who follow a certain political philosophy and their qualifications for their positions are the important factors, not their sex. 125

The images that these women portray as office holders does not reflect their sex, either. Women in today's legislature perceive themselves as: well-informed, hard-working, intelligent, dedicated, prepared, responsible, understanding, capable, professional, efficient, honest, reasonable, business-like, and politically astute. 126

123 Ibid.
124 Questionnaire results.
125 Ibid.
126 Ibid.
The interesting to note, however, is that although many of the women feel there is not sex delineation among these qualities, most feel that women surpass men because they pursue a higher level of intensity at the political level. Edwin Pert says, "There's no question they (the male lawmakers) take women more seriously and they have to, because the women are producing."127 Libby Mitchell, the first woman to be elected House Majority Leader, says, Women do work harder when they get here... We try harder. Women are conscientious and they do their homework..."128 Susan Bell, a freshman legislator sums up this observation when she said, "I think that being a woman is an advantage, but I try very hard not to use this advantage unfairly against the poor fellow!"129

Ninety per cent of the women feel that they have been elected to represent their constituents and do so as best they can. They feel a responsibility to serve the public and to be protective of all citizen's rights.130

Maine's Women in Power

Maine can be classifiable as a progressive state in terms of political leadership. In the area of women in politics, the state of Maine has proven that it is receptive to women in legislative and leadership positions.

128 Ibid.
129 Personal interview, February 27, 1982.
130 Questionnaire results
Several women in the past have served as Assistant Minority or Majority Leaders in the House and the Senate. In 1981, Maine opened a new avenue for women when the House of Representatives elected Libby Mitchell as House Majority Leader. This is just one more area where a woman has entered and proven herself as capable to handle a position as the men who proceeded her. Another area where women have proven capable and have power disproportionate to their numbers is within the committee structure of the Legislature. Presently, seven of 19 committees are chaired by women and two, Labor and Health and Institutional Services are headed by women both in the House and in the Senate. These positions were assigned by the Speaker of the House after these women had exhibited their commitment to the legislative work they were elected to do.

What does the future hold for women who wish to become involved in Maine's political culture? The answer is not known but based on past circumstance, the future looks positive for those women who wish to seek higher office as the past has shaped the political scenario to include women in the State government structure.

Maine presently has approximately 100 women who have filed papers for state nominations and there are two women waging campaigns for gubernatorial nominations. Although the prospects look good for one of these candidates to become the first woman governor of Maine, if they are not
successful, many people do not think it will be long before Maine voters chose a woman for this prestigious office. The voters of the State have long been comfortable with the idea of women in elective offices and according to one editorial, "There is no indication that voters would balk at installing a woman in the Blaine House." 131

Sex is not a barrier for political office because women have proven throughout the years that they can be effective legislators. Women have dared to run against traditional cultural, political forces and have prevailed. They have effectively refuted many of the myths that inhibited women from seeking office and the theories that women could not perform capable as politicians.

Women have earned the respect of their colleagues and constituents. They have made significant legislative advances and have been staunch in their support of certain legislation. They are aware of pressing and important issues. They are well-informed on a variety of topics. They have listened, learned, and reacted to their political situation and if the trend continues, can only have a positive impact on legislating, the political process, and the State as a whole. As Libby Mitchell says, "The future for women is limitless." 132

132 Ibid.
APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire was mailed to all the women presently serving in the 110th Maine Legislature in November 1981. The overall response rate was 47 per cent. The breakdown among the respondents was 5 Senators and 15 Representatives.

1. What is your present position or title?
2. How many years have you served in this elective position?
3. Have you held any elective position other than your present one?
4. If so, what elective position(s) did you hold?
5. How many years did you serve in this capacity?
6. Have you held any appointive position(s) in local or state government other than your present position?
7. If so, what position(s) were you appointed to?
8. How many years did you serve in this capacity?
9. Were you successful in your first campaign to win elective office?
10. If not, how many elections did you participate in before you were successful?
11. How did you first become involved in local or state politics?
12. Why did you decide to run for an elective office?
13. In addition to the reasons mentioned above, were there any people or groups who influenced you to run for that office?
14. Have you found it difficult to receive financial backing or campaign funds for your campaign(s)?
15. Do you think that the fact that you are a woman influenced your ability to receive campaign contributions?
16. Do you think that the political recruitment in Maine is geared to accepting and supporting female candidates?
17. In what ways?
18. During your first campaign for elective office, did you downplay that your sex?
19. Did you emphasize it?
20. What kind of image do you like to portray?
21. Do you feel that you were elected solely to represent your constituents, or to represent women of the state, or both?
22. How would you describe the job of being a legislator - what are the most important things a legislator should do?
23. What do you consider your chief accomplishments as a legislator?
24. In which aspects have you been least successful?
25. What is the attitude toward women in elective office by other women? by constituents? by your male counterparts?
26. Have you noticed a change in attitude by any of the above groups during your political career.
27. Do you think that women have more difficulty in gaining acceptance than men?
28. Have you noticed an effect on the acceptance of women politicians, by constituents and colleagues, that could be attributed to the present women's movement?
29. If so, in what areas do you think this affect has taken place?
30. Do you think that certain major issues are delineated along gender lines?
31. If so, what issues fall under this category?
32. Do you think there are issues today which are mainly the concern of women?
33. If so, what issues fall under this category?
34. Do you think that constituents expect you to be "gender conscious" on certain issues because you are a woman?
35. If so, what issues fall under this category?
36. Do you think there is any sex discrimination in your position?
37. Do you feel sex discrimination is present within the political realm?
38. Do you feel any discrimination from your constituents?
39. Do you think that women in Maine's government have an opportunity to seek higher office?
40. How do you think the state of Maine compares with other states as far as women in politics are concerned?

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Your present age: 
Your marital status:
Your highest level of education:
Please list any non-political occupation you have held or presently hold:
Your party affiliation:
Do you have children?
The present ages of your children:
The ages of your children when you first sought elective office:
Do you think your children have been affected in any way because of your present position?
What has been your husband's general attitude toward your political activity?
Has he played a role in your activities?
How much time do you spend away from home?
How difficult do you find it to balance your career and home life?
First Aid to Patriotism

PATRIOTISM depends on love of country and a SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY to one's country.

The responsibility in a democratic government like the United States rests with the voters.

As long as one-half the People are denied the vote, the sense of responsibility in one-half the People will not be fully developed.

Sons inherit from mothers as well as fathers.

Does the country need patriotic and responsible men?

Then it must develop patriotic women with a high sense of responsibility.

Women Suffrage Means Patriotism.

Women want to vote because the ballot is an added means of serving their country, and is a great developer of responsibility.

True Preparedness means the development of all the country's resources. Until the women of this nation are equally responsible with men, one-half of its resources will be neglected, and the country will not reach its full development of strength.

VOTES FOR WOMEN!

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National Woman Suffrage Publishing Company, Inc. New York City
Woman Suffrage Brings:

1. Better government for less money. For example, the tax rate per 1,000 is $1.20 in Kansas and $23.50 in Maine.
2. Interest in elections due to the stimulus created by general discussion and wider education.
3. A vital strengthening of government by a better selection of officials. Prominent men in suffrages states say so.
4. The increased strengthening of good interests in our cities as shown in the curbing of the social, liquor and other evils in San Francisco and Chicago.
5. The spread of democracy at home for which the world is fighting abroad. A real government for the people by the all the people; not a government by part of the people for all the people.
6. The increased influence of rural communities as indicated in the endorsement of suffrage by national and state Grange.
7. The introduction of the great moral force of women by arming them with the means to fight vice. The influence of bad women is nil. All vicious interests now have the franchise except prostitutes who constitute but one-third to one-half per cent of women. Out of every 100 prison inmates only 5 are women.
8. Sex antagonism created by the discrimination in laws for thousands of years has been eliminated by the equalization of the sexes. Nowhere is there less than in the suffrage states.

VOTE FOR WOMAN SUFFRAGE SEPTEMBER 10TH.

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MAINE STATE SUFFRAGE CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE BANGOR JUNE, 1917.
Stand by the Country

TO DEFEND THE NATION all its resources are needed. Women must be mobilized equally with men.

As a measure of Preparedness Give Women the Vote.

England has had to do it. The new franchise bill will give the vote to 6,000,000 women.

Canada has done it. Since the war began five big Canadian provinces have given women the vote.

France is going to do it. The Chamber of Deputies has announced that the municipal vote will be given at once to women.

Denmark did it in 1915; when threatened by war, she gave the vote to women.

Russia is basing her new government on universal suffrage.

THE UNITED STATES HAS BEGUN. Since January North Dakota, Ohio, Indiana, Rhode Island, Michigan, and Nebraska have been added to the twelve woman suffrage states by giving the Presidential vote to Women. Arkansas has broken the ranks of the Solid South and given women primary suffrage. Maine should not lag behind.

Don't wait for the tragedies of War to prove that the Country belongs to Both men and women.

It is our Country as well as yours. Give us the vote that we may support it most effectively in both war and peace.

VOTE FOR WOMAN SUFFRAGE SEPTEMBER 10TH

MAINE STATE SUFFRAGE CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE BANGOR JUNE, 1917
Your Vote

Was handed to you when you became twenty-one years old.
You didn't have to ask for it.
You didn't have to prove that you were qualified for it.

Our Government considers you are a thinking being, and therefore you can judge better than others what laws will be best for your welfare.

Why shouldn't women be given this right, too?
Should not their opinions count when it comes to framing laws concerning them?

Can YOU possibly imagine any one objecting to YOUR being allowed to vote?

Yet fifty chances to one you would not have been permitted to vote if you had lived about a hundred and fifty years ago.

Men had to own a required amount of land and be church-going Protestants.

Only one of every fifty men could meet this requirement.

In the early Colonial days men had no voice in the Government.

Laws were made by the Governor and his council.

Today practically every man may vote.

YOU didn't have to work to bring about this change.

The men before you, who believed in democracy, secured YOUR vote for you.

Women now vote in Canada. Vote to make the women of Maine the political equals of the women of Canada, Great Britain, and Russia.

VOTE FOR WOMAN SUFFRAGE SEPTEMBER 10TH!

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MAINE STATE SUFFRAGE CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE BANGOR JUNE 1917
Why Does a Man Vote?

1st. Because in this way he protects his interests, and he knows what those interests are better than any other.

2nd. Because he pays taxes and helps support the government.

3rd. Because by voting for certain men to represent him in government he thus gives his consent to what they do.

Why Should Women Vote?

1st. They have interests to protect the same as men have.

2nd. They pay taxes and help support the government the same as men do.

3rd. They must obey the laws the same as men do.

Yet women are forbidden any voice in the making of laws because they are women.

Why enfranchise every man, whether he is educated or illiterate, moral or immoral, a property holder or not, sober or drunk, because he is a man; and disenfranchise every woman no matter how wise she is, how good, how public spirited, simply because she is a woman?

Men of Maine!
Do justice to your women. Enfranchise them upon the same terms as you enfranchise men.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY


