

MS. SMITH GOES TO WASHINGTON

FROM PAGE 13

(In regard to state suffrage, by 1910 Oregon had failed to pass five such referendums, but that same year Washington became the first state since 1896 to grant women the vote, approving the measure by almost two to one. In 1911 suffragists mounted an intense campaign in California and by 3,857 votes the state's women won the right to cast their own ballots. In 1914 suffrage was on the ballot in seven states: defeated in Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, North and South Dakota, it won in Montana and Nevada. Four East Coast states voted down suffrage in 1915: they were Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania. Two years later New York overturned the earlier vote and became the first East Coast state to grant women suffrage. Also that year 1917 women gained the right to vote after legislative action in six states: Indiana, Michigan, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio and Rhode Island. They also won the right to vote in primaries in Arkansas. Michigan, Oklahoma and South Dakota gained full suffrage the following year, and in Texas women were allowed to vote in primaries through legislative action, though literacy tests prevented many black and Mexican-American women from voting.)

The House approved the 19th Amendment in May 1919 (304 to 89) after a lame-duck Senate defeated it in February that year. The Senate finally reversed its long rejection to women's suffrage in June with a vote of 66 to 30. Within one week three states — Wisconsin, Illinois and Michigan — ratified the amendment and by the end of the year more than twenty states had passed the measure. By the end of March 1920, thirty-five of the required thirty-six states had ratified the amendment. A single vote in the Tennessee House of Representatives in August (Harry Burn, whose mother was a suffragist and told him to "be a good boy" and vote for ratification) gave the U.S. Constitution its 19th Amendment, which was declared official on August 26. Two other states, Vermont and Connecticut, ratified it later.

(Ten states did not ratify the 19th Amendment. They were Alabama, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Virginia, North and South Carolina. The 38 states that approved the amendment were more than the three-fourths of states needed to pass it.)

"Throughout the suffrage struggle, America's history, her principles, her traditions stood forth to indicate the inevitability of woman suffrage. Yet the years went by, decade followed decade, and 26 other countries gave the vote to their women while America delayed," Carrie Chapman Catt and Nettie Rogers Shuler wrote in their 1923 book, *Woman Suffrage & Politics: The Inner Story of the Suffrage Movement*. "Why the delay? We think we have the answer. It was not an antagonistic public sentiment, nor yet an uneducated or indifferent public sentiment — it was the control of public sentiment, the deflecting and the thwarting of public sentiment, through the trading and the trickery, the buying and the selling of American politics. We think that we can prove it."

At a National Women's Party convention in 1921, Alice Paul introduced what she said was the next women's rights issue — passage of an Equal Rights Amendment. In 1923 the NWP started a new journal, *Equal Rights*, edited by Edith Houghton Hooker, and introduced its Equal Rights Amendment (nicknamed the 'Lucretia Mott Amendment') into Congress. This bill stated: "Men and women shall have equal rights throughout the United States and every place subject to its jurisdiction." Many women's groups and labor activists opposed the bill because it eliminated hardwon protective legislation for women workers. (Indeed, the Supreme Court invalidated a minimum wage law essentially because it didn't give men and women equal rights.)

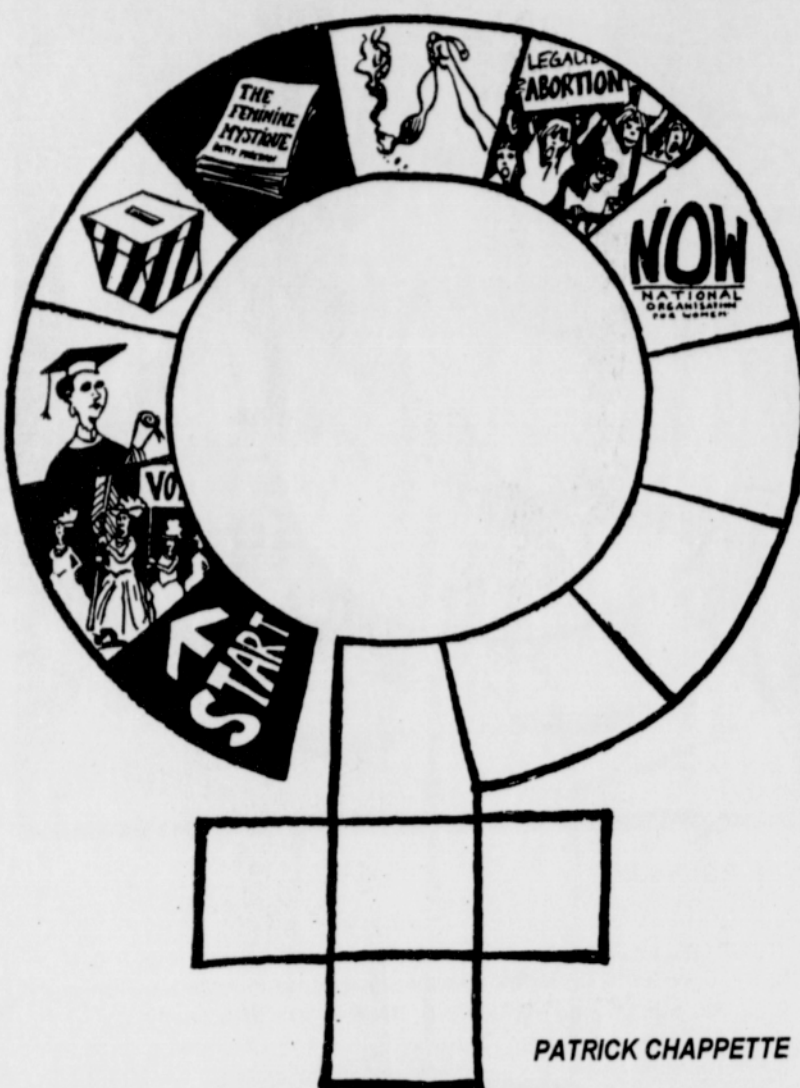
Reintroduced into the House by Congresswoman Hattie Caraway in 1943, the ERA was changed to read:

"Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex."

Failing to pass, women in several states set up ERA committees that lobbied state legislatures to pressure Congress. The Senate voted on the ERA for the first time in more than 20 years in 1947. The count of 38 for and 35 against was far short of the two-thirds majority needed.

In 1967 the National Organization for Women (NOW) made as one of eight demands included in its Bill of Rights "immediate passage of the Equal Rights Amendment."

Finally, in 1970 the House approved the ERA, 350 to 15 after only an hour debate following Representative Martha Griffiths successful effort to get it out of the judiciary committee. But the Senate refused to vote on the ERA until 1972 following intense lobbying by women's groups, especially NOW. The measure was approved 84 to 8. By the end of the year 22 states, led by Hawaii, ratified the amendment. In addition six states (Colorado, Hawaii, Maryland, New Mexico, Texas and Washing-



ton) added equal rights amendments to their state constitutions, preceded by Pennsylvania the year before. However, by 1978 Congress was urged to extend the ratification deadline beyond March 1979 because a shortfall of 35 out of a required 38 states had ratified the ERA. Seven years were requested but Congress extended the deadline only four years to June 30, 1982.

ERA supporters not only fought campaigns to pass ERA in the states but also ones to rescind it. In 1979 NOW and other groups managed to head off attempts to revoke ERA ratification in 13 states but were unable to gain any new states.

The necessary three states never ratified the ERA although polls showed that 63% of the public supported it, with only 32% opposed. Fifteen states rejected the ERA, and four others attempted to rescind their support but the move was thought to be unconstitutional.

Among the main arguments used to defeat the ERA were the specter of women being drafted and forced to serve in combat, the potential loss of alimony and child custody preference in divorce cases, and the possibility that tax money would have to be used for abortions. Antifeminists also put forth absurd but highly symbolic scenarios, such as unisex toilets. Rightwing women such as Phyllis Schlafly and her Eagle Forum (dedicated to "family values" and "law and order") considerably upset the ERA campaign.

The present day feminist movement incubated between the suffrage and ERA movements and emerged in the late 1960s as vigorously renewed successor to women's rights movements that had languished in the post-World War 2 years. In November 1968, about 200 women from thirty cities attended the first national women's liberation conference, which commemorated the 120th anniversary of the first women's rights meeting at

Seneca Falls. Radical women of color were not invited which created problems later.

"The situation between the sexes now, and throughout history, is...a relationship of dominance and subordination," Kate Millett wrote in her 1970 book, *Sexual Politics*. "However muted its present appearance may be, sexual dominion obtains...as perhaps the most pervasive ideology of our culture and provides its most fundamental concept of power. This is so because our society...is a patriarchy. The fact is evident at once if one recalls that the military, industry, technology, universities, science, political office, and finance — in short, every...avenue of power is entirely in male hands."

In 1971 Bella Abzug, Shirley Chisholm, Betty Friedan, Gloria Steinem and others helped found the National Women's Political Caucus, which was devoted to increase women's political strength by organizing local caucuses, backing women candidates, and assuring fair representation of women and their issues within the leading political parties. Forty percent of the delegates to the 1972 Democratic National Convention were women, compared to 13% four years earlier. GOP women delegates to the Republican Convention in 1972 made up 35%.

Also in 1972 Shirley Chisholm became the first black woman candidate for the Presidency. "I have met far more discrimination as a woman than being black in politics," she said. "But in spite of it all I went to the Democratic convention...and began to open the way for women to think they can run."

That year the NWPC set up two associations to train women for political participation and to help finance women candidates, the National Women's Education Fund and the Women's Campaign Fund.

In 1974 Ella Tambussi Grasso became the first woman governor elected entirely on her own without succeeding a husband. Connecticut elected her by a significant majority. But only 11 states have ever had women governors and only Texas has had a second woman governor. The other states that have elected women governors are Alabama, Connecticut, Kansas, Nebraska, New Jersey, Oregon, Vermont, Washington and Wyoming. (In 1995 the 10 states with the most women in their legislatures were, in order, Washington, Nevada, Colorado, Arizona, Utah, New Hampshire, Oregon, Maryland, Idaho and Kansas. The state with the fewest women legislators was Alabama.)

"The best way to assure recognition of women's political concerns is to elect officeholders who not only are pro-women's issues but are women themselves," Eleanor Smeal wrote in *Women on the Ballot — And in Office* in 1984. "Women should think seriously about running for office and encourage other women to do so. The quickest way for us to elect more women to public office is for more women to run as candidates."

The 20th century started with more than five million women working at outside employment, about one-fifth of all U.S. women. The greatest increase was in clerical work, which employed primarily white women. Two other areas of dramatic increase were telephone operators and sales clerks. Nearly 30% of jobs for women were as domestic workers (a large percentage black and immigrants). Others worked on farms, as teachers or in factories (primarily garment or textile).

In 1909 women shirtwaist workers attempted to organize at two companies in New York City, were fired and immediately formed a picket line. They persevered despite arrests and beatings by police. Called the "Uprising of the 20,000" it was the largest strike of women workers to date. They did not win many of their demands but were supported by the Women's Trade Union League and proved that women were able to organize.

Two years later, on March 25, 1911, fire broke out at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory where the 1909 strike began. Exits were locked (against the law) and fire ladders were unable to reach the top floors, so 146 workers, most of them young immigrant women, jumped into the street or burned to death. Rose Schneiderman gave an impassioned speech and thousands of mourners marched down 5th Avenue. "This is not the first time girls have been burned alive in this city," Schneiderman said. "Every week I must learn of the untimely death of one of my sister workers. Too much blood has been spilled. I know from my experience it is up to working people to save themselves. The only way they can save themselves is by a strong working class movement."

(The shirtwaist factory owners were acquitted following an investigation that was as corrupt as it was scandalous.)

Massachusetts passed the first minimum wage law for women in 1912. Other states passed similar laws but the U.S. Supreme Court disavowed them in 1923. The Justices contended that with the vote women were essentially equal with men and no longer needed "special protection." The decision knocked out all existing state minimum wage laws. But the Court reversed itself in 1937 and upheld a Washington State minimum wage law for women. In its decision the Court deplored the "exploitation of a class of workers who are in an unusual position with respect to bargaining power" and said "What these workers lose in wages the taxpayers are called upon to pay. The bare cost of living must be met."

During World War 1 women took over many men's jobs, working in blast furnaces, smelting brass and copper, producing chemicals and manufacturing automobiles and railway parts. Women operated streetcars and elevators and delivered the mail. Their wartime work led to formation of the Women in Industrial Service in the Department of Labor in 1918 (later the

HAIL TO THE CHIEF

The following poem is written to reflect feelings I have about current events. Historically, this same type of thing happens over and over again, with the same results. Don't get me wrong, I'm not for or against one political party or another. I don't care for any politicians, it doesn't matter what country they are from.

Don't speak to me of honor
and generosity,
you viper in a 3pc suit,
complete with Ph.D.

The attitude you carry
exposes your Life's Creed
based on the filth of power
weighted well with greed.

You speak of "God's Great Blessings"
to the middle class.
Then, speak of jobs and health care
to the struggling mass.

You find a stately enemy,
A Focal-Pointed Foe,
to justify your lawless moves
to the Average Joe.

Your rants and raves about this fiend,
stirs fear throughout the land.
Young men line-up and then sign-up,
to help you make your stand.

You sanctify this violence
and teach them how to kill.
Their actions once well scolded for,
becomes their Life's Blood skill.

Then...when your term is over
and your office time is up,
your game produced no winners
and no victorious cup.

You turn these well trained killers
back onto our street.
Crime rates rise, before our eyes.
The cycle's now complete.

~LINDA MacDONALD-LEWIS



VAN DUSEN BEVERAGES

ASTORIA, OREGON ☎ 325-2362

AVAGALLERY

ASTORIA VUSUAL ARTS
160 10TH ST., ASTORIA
BACK ON THE BLOCK 2 DOORS DOWN

On The Air



Making Waves