

# The Kansas Woman Suffrage Movement, 1859-1912

582 Kansas suffragists (women & men; white & black) are listed at  
<https://suffragistmemorial.org/suffragists-in-kansas/>

Presented by historian Jeanne Klein

On behalf of the Kansas Suffragist Memorial Committee

A mockup of “Rebel Women” by Phyllis Pease (Manhattan, KS)  
to be installed in the Kansas State Capitol



# Five Kansas Campaigns for Constitutional Amendments

1861 School district suffrage granted

1867 Woman & Black male suffrage (1<sup>st</sup> in nation) defeated

1870 US 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment (Black male suffrage)

1887 Municipal suffrage granted (1<sup>st</sup> in nation)

1894 Full suffrage defeated

1912 Equal suffrage granted

1920 – US 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment

# Clarina I. H. Nichols (1810-1885) (Quindaro/Wyandotte)



Kansapedia, Kansas Historical Society

Sparked and led woman suffrage movement:

1854 - 1<sup>st</sup> women's rights lectures in Lawrence

1857 → Underground RR conductor in Quindaro

1859 - Collected 600 signatures on petition to argue for WS at Wyandotte Convention

1861 – Won right to vote in school board elections, child custody & limited property rights

Wrote KS chapter (1848-61) *HWS* Vol. 1



# The 1867 Campaign

To remove the words “white” and “male” from the State Constitution

1<sup>st</sup> in nation attracted national suffragists



Elizabeth Cady Stanton &  
Susan B. Anthony



Lucy Stone & Henry Blackwell

**DEFEATED**



Rev. Olympia Brown

# Helen Ekin Starrett (1840-1920) (Lawrence)

SBA stayed at her Lawrence home (1867-79)

Attended 1<sup>st</sup> National WS Convention (1869)

Lectured and Published WS articles

Moved to Chicago (1880) and continued  
advocating for women's and girls' rights

Wrote part of 1867 KS chapter *HWS* Vol. 2



Courtesy of Julie Phelps, great granddaughter

# Anna C. Wait (1837-1916)

## (Lincoln)



Organized suffragists in Lincoln (1879)

Owned/edited *The Lincoln Beacon* to spread suffrage news across Kansas (1880-1901)

Co-founded the Kansas Equal Suffrage Association (KESA) with Bertha H. Ellsworth; 1<sup>st</sup> KESA meeting in Topeka (June 1884)

KESA President (1885-86)

Wrote KS chapter (1876-85) *HWS* Vol. 3



# Kansas Equal Suffrage Association (1884-1913)

Annual meetings were held in cities and towns across Kansas  
Topeka, Salina, Lincoln,  
Newton, Emporia,  
Wichita, Atchison,  
Enterprise, Winfield,  
Eureka, Yates Center,  
Paola, KCK,  
Olathe, McPherson,  
Abilene, Lawrence



# KESA Presidents

1885-86 - Anna C. Wait (Lincoln)

1887-95 – Laura M. Johns (Salina)

1895-97 - Kate R. Addison (Eureka)

1898 – Abbie A. Welch (Paola)

1899 – Annie L. Diggs (Topeka)

1900 – Laura A. Gregg (Garnett)

1901-03 – Helen L. Kimber (Liberty/Parsons)

1904 – Sadie P. Grisham (Cottonwood Falls)

1905-06 – Roxana E. Rice (Lawrence)

1907 – Lilla D. Monroe (Topeka)

1908 – Mary A. Horton (Topeka)

1909-10 - Catherine A. Hoffman (Enterprise)

1911-12 – Lucy B. Johnston (Topeka)

1913 – Genevieve H. Chalkley (Lawrence) – Jubilee Celebration

# The 1887 Campaign



*Senate Chamber - East wing - session of 1886 - partly finished*

# Anna O. Anthony (1844-1930) (Leavenworth)



Anna O. Anthony, sister-in-law of Susan B. Anthony, hosted national suffragists with her husband, Daniel R. Anthony, at their Leavenworth home during the 1887 campaign.



The first Kansas National Votes for Women Trail marker, located up the street from their home, was dedicated in Oct. 2023.



# Martia L. Berry (1844-1894)

(Cawker City)



Teacher, business owner, and ardent supporter of women's rights

Long-time treasurer of KESA (1885→)

Attended KESA convention in Lincoln (1886)

President, Sixth District of Kansas Woman's Christian Temperance Union (1887)

**On February 15, 1887 (SBA birthday),  
Kansas became the first state in the nation  
to grant municipal suffrage to women**

# Sarah A. Brown (1838-1923)

## (Lawrence)



Courtesy of Watkins Museum

Active in 1867, 1887, & 1894 campaigns thru 1911

1<sup>st</sup> woman nominated for a State office (1880)  
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Co-authored “What [Women] Voters Can Do” (March 1887) - 50,000 copies distributed across the state

# Susanna M. Salter (1860-1961)

(Argonia)

First woman Mayor elected in the US (April 1887)

Member of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and Prohibition Party in Argonia

Attended KESA convention (1887-88)



# Carolyn (Langston) Hughes (1873-1938) & Mary Jane Dillard (1874-1954)



Carrie Langston, a civil rights advocate, urged African American women to enter politics as journalists (1892). She encouraged the literary education of her son Langston Hughes in Topeka.

Mamie Dillard, a prominent educator, promoted temperance (1892) and civil rights in education. She taught Langston Hughes in Lawrence.



# Laura M. Johns (1849-1935)

## (Salina)



WS lecturer & journalist (1884→)

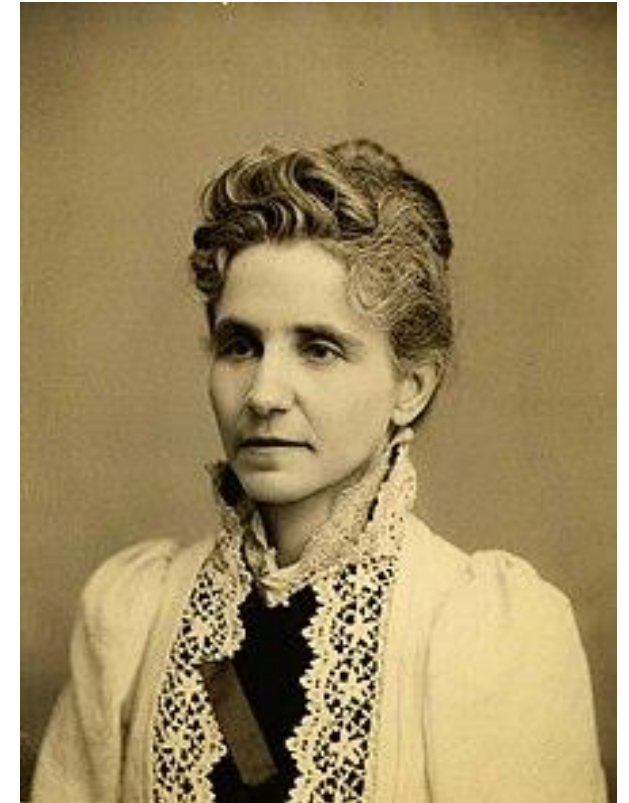
KESA President, 6 terms (1887-95)

President, Kansas Republican Women's Association (1892)

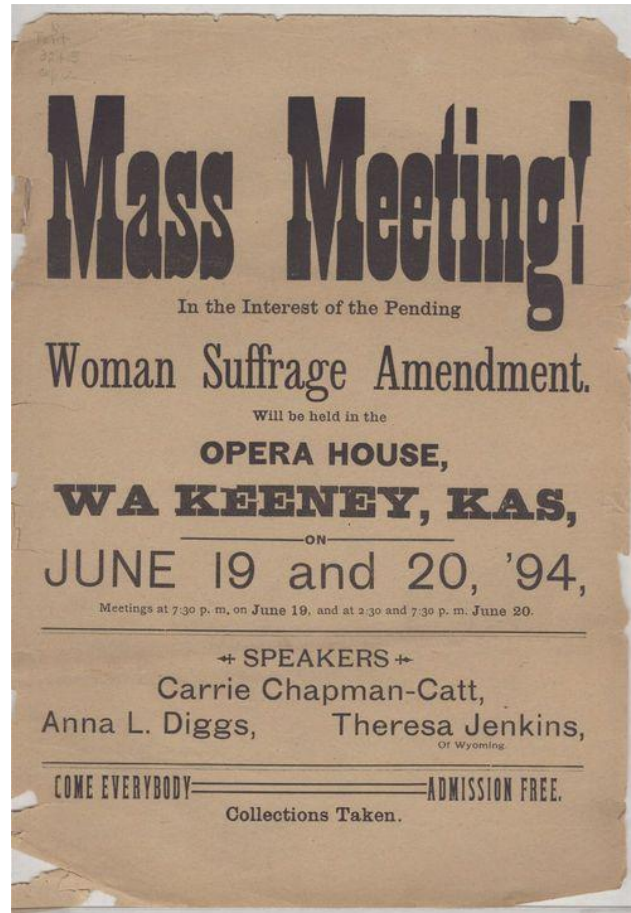
Lobbied Republican legislators (1891-94)

Coordinated 30 suffrage conventions across Kansas (1892→)

Chaired Kansas WS Amendment Campaign for NWSA (1894)



# The 1894 Campaign for full (presidential) suffrage



Kansas Memory.org

After Colorado won full suffrage in 1893, Kansas suffragists held mass meetings and rallies across the state.

*The Suffrage Advocate* (published by W.H.T. Wakefield, Lawrence), a 4-page newsletter, circulated 5,000 copies (July-Aug. 1894).

Over half (58%) of Kansas male voters **DEFEATED** this amendment by 34,837 votes and 25% did not vote on the amendment at all.

# Annie L. Diggs (1853-1916)

(Lawrence/Topeka)



Lectured on WS & temperance (1880→)

Attended NWSA conventions (1881, 1885)

Lobbied Populist legislators (1891-94)  
“I am the fierce one. I scare people.”

State Librarian (1898-1902)  
helped design library in Capitol

KESA President (1899)

Wrote KS chapter (1883-1900) *HWS* Vol. 4



# Laura A. Gregg Cannon (1869-1945) (Garnett)

Hired as a field organizer/lecturer for NAWSA in  
Oklahoma & Arizona Territories (1895→1904,  
1909)

Organized several Kansas counties (1898)

KESA President (1900)



# Lilla D. Monroe (1858-1929)

(Wakeeney (1884)/Topeka (1901))

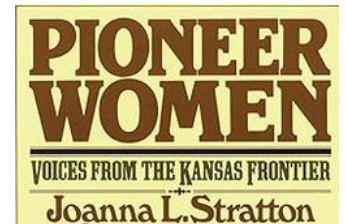


First woman to practice law before the  
Kansas Supreme Court (1895)

KESA President (1907)

Published the *Kansas Woman's Journal*  
(1920s)

Gathered stories from 800 pioneer women  
Published by great granddaughter (1981)



# Lutie A. Lytle (1875-1955)

(Topeka)



Born in Tennessee, moved to Topeka with family (1882)

First African American woman admitted to Kansas Bar Association (1897)

Lectured on marriage and divorce laws in Kansas



# ***Kansas Suffrage Reveille***

Official KESA newspaper

55 issues published monthly (Mar.1896-Nov.1900)

Spread suffrage news about:

State and local equal suffrage organizations

Elections of women to local offices

Activities of national suffragists

Edited and published by:

Kate R. Addison in Eureka (1896-98)

Alice M. David in Leroy (1898-1900)

**KESA asked for full suffrage 5 more times (1900-09) but all bills died (mostly in the Senate)**



# Sadie P. Grisham (1859-1928)

## (Cottonwood Falls)

Teacher, principal, superintendent

City Council President, Cottonwood Falls (1889)

KESA President (1904)

Campaigned across Chase County (1912)

Founding member, Kansas Women's Lawyers  
Assoc. (1919)



# Elizabeth “Lizzie” S. Sheldon (1851-1942) (Lawrence)



*Lawrence Daily Journal-World (1914)*

KU Law graduate (1900) - staunch Democrat

Lobbied state legislators (1907→)  
--without consulting KESA

1<sup>st</sup> woman to run for State Supreme Court  
Justice (1914)



Lizzie S. Sheldon wrote the resolution for the  
Constitutional Amendment (1911)

**“The rights of citizens of the state of  
Kansas to vote and hold offices shall not  
be denied or abridged on account of  
sex.”**



# Lucy B. Johnston (1846-1937)

(Minneapolis (1867)/Topeka (1875))

Earned Doctor of Laws degree, Oxford, OH  
(1866)

Expanded the Kansas Traveling Library's  
collection (1899→)

KESA President (1911-12)

Wrote KS chapter (1900-20) *HWS Vol. 6*



# The 1912 Campaign for Full Woman Suffrage



# Lucy B. Johnston explained how & why women won full suffrage in 1912

- As a prohibition state for 32 years, men were “deprived of [liquor] centers, where they could congregate their forces” and the AP had exposed their anti-suffragist lies just before the election
- The Men’s Equal Suffrage League (inc. her husband) conducted speakers’ tour at no charge
- Workers travelled to where crowds gathered at chautauqua, factories, and county fairs
- Suffragists spoke to teachers, ministers, farmers, temperance unions, and women’s organizations at respective conventions
- The Progressive movement led converted party politicians to join the bandwagon for equal justice

# Automobile Parade in Topeka



Governor Walter R. Stubbs (driver) & Stella H. Stubbs (back R) with Lucy B. Johnston & Sarah A. Thurston (Topeka), and Laura Clay (KY) (Kansas Memory.org)

# Auto parade during Douglas County Fair in Lawrence



Courtesy of Spencer Research Library.



# Minnie J. Grinstead (1869-1925)

(Larned/Liberal)

Earned a life-time teaching certificate from Emporia State University

Moved to Liberal (1906); Campaigned for WS in the Seventh Congressional District

\*First woman elected to the Kansas House of Representatives (1918)

Presented the joint resolution to ratify the 19th Amendment on June 16, 1919



# Jane L. Brooks (1867-1945)

(Wichita)



KESA President (1917-18)

\*Founded the first state chapter of the national League of Women Voters (1919)

Known as a “a formidable lady who you knew would make a success of whatever she did.”



# What lessons can we learn from the Kansas Suffrage Movement today?



Yellow for KS sunflowers

White for purity

Purple for loyalty