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Debating Suffrage? The 'Still Hunt' in Spokane, 1898

Sometime during early 1898, members of five different organizations in Spokane began to establish a local Federation of Women's Clubs. The group held together long enough to host a June 15 reception welcoming delegates to an annual meeting of the Washington State Federation of Women's Clubs.¹ But this harmony vanished quickly. The city Federation had fallen apart, a historian later explained, because of "strenuous disagreement about the burning issue of woman suffrage."²

Strenuous though it was, women on both sides of the issue kept their battles private, preferring to wage a 'Still Hunt.' In so doing, they were applying a term that they commonly used to describe a personal campaign that was not easily visible to outsiders. Whether these women acknowledged it or not, the most prominent suffragist in the Pacific Northwest, Abigail Scott Duniway was the chief advocate of waging the 'Still Hunt' as a method of promoting women's rights to the ballot.³ She and other women in the region recognized that attempting to pressure voters into supporting their cause would not help them win friends or meet their goals. Instead they would wage a still hunt, maintaining a more traditionally feminine facade. They would simply tell the chivalrous men living in the Pacific Northwest what they wanted, and then voters would support the ladies' wishes at the ballot box.

During 1898 in Spokane, both sides found waging a 'still hunt' useful, but it proved easier and more productive for the anti-suffragists. They wanted to maintain the status quo, while their opponents needed to convince voters that women's roles should be changed. Thus, their campaign could be less

¹ "Our Bright Women" *Spokesman Review*, June 15, 1898, 5. This meeting may well have happened in a church. The Reverend Jonathan Edwards, one of Spokane's earliest published historians mentioned the local federation of clubs in his work, "An Illustrated History of Spokane County, State of Washington, 1847-1929, W. H. Lever, 1900.

² Orville Pratt, *The Story of Spokane*, unpublished manuscript at Spokane Public Library, 1948. Club women in the city briefly maintained a Federation of Women's clubs just after the turn of the century, but failed to sustain such an organization until 1911, after women in Washington had won the right to vote. For further information on club women and anti-suffragists, see Jane Jerome Camhi, *Women Against Women*, Scholarship in Women's History: Rediscovered and New, vol. 4, ed. Gerda Lerner, Carlson Publishing Inc, Brooklyn New York, 1994.

³ Ruth Barnes Moynihan, *Rebel For Rights*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983.

organized.⁴ They argued with suffragists at club meetings held behind closed doors and expressed their opposition to the amendment at home, but avoided having their names publicly connected to anti-suffrage.

Politically minded people in Spokane were not accustomed to keeping the discussion of such public issues private. One local editor labeled the suffrage/anti suffrage debate a “queer campaign.”⁵ Besides mystifying contemporaries, these women left to posterity no diaries or letters which might have shed light on the conflict. Thus, one paper’s quest during the summer of 1898 to discover the identity of local anti-suffragists remains the best record of Spokane’s ‘Still Hunt.’

During the previous spring, in March 1897, both houses of the state legislature had approved the proposed suffrage amendment. News of its passing had reached Spokane quickly, but the local newspaper editors discussed it only briefly. The *Spokesman Review*, the largest daily, mentioned that some women had been in the Capital Building to celebrate, but rather than focus on their victory, it emphasized the political maneuvering between competing House and Senate versions of the bill.⁶ The city’s evening paper, *The Chronicle*, devoted even less space to the amendment, briefly listing each of the bills passed, then complaining about the small number of initiatives that had come from state lawmakers that year.⁷

The newspaper’s ambivalent tones reflected the editor’s own attitudes, and provides a window into Spokane’s collective perspective on woman suffrage. First, it was not new. Twice during Washington’s territorial days, women had won the right to vote, but each time opponents had used legal technicalities to kill the measures.⁸ Second, although white middle class women in Spokane were heavily involved in social, pleasure, and charitable clubs, no suffrage organization existed in the city at that time.⁹ Third, liquor interests heavily influenced the city’s politics, and seeing the prominent role that local WCTU members took in suffrage, they assumed that all suffragists supported prohibition.

Although facing some real obstacles, local supporters of the amendment waited a year to begin. Members of the WCTU first brought the pending amendment to a reporter’s attention in late February

⁴Antis were most active where suffragists were most successful. See, Thomas J. Jablonsky, *The Home, Heaven and Mother Party*, Scholarship in Women’s History Rediscovered and New, v. 6, Gerda Lerner, editor, Carleson Publishing Inc., 1994.

⁵ “Still Hunt for Suffrage, *The Chronicle*, October 13, 1898, 7.

⁶ “Woman Suffrage Amendment” *Spokesman Review*, March 11, 1897, 1:2.

⁷ “These Got Through” *The Chronicle*, March 12, 1897, 8:1.

⁸ For further information on the years of conflict giving women the right to vote in Washington, see

⁹ The first long-term suffrage organization founded in Spokane would be established in the middle of 1907, just two and a half years before the final vote giving women the right to vote in Washington in 1910.

1898. *The Chronicle* announced that the equal suffragists had started a campaign with a prayer vigil.

These women had discussed sending out speakers but had decided to put it off, and had settled on devoting ten minutes of each meeting to pray that the amendment would pass. A skeptical reporter recorded the proceedings, then added a bit incredulously, “Of course that shows how ignorant they are of what’s the usual thing in American politics—proves how demoralizing woman’s influence would be.”¹⁰

In addition to the WCTU members’ prayers, local club women who freely bought into the concept of a ‘Still Hunt’ found many subtle ways to promote their cause. These women had bought into the progressive ideology so popular in the late nineteenth century. And they used clubs to work out a feminine version of progressivism. They cared for orphans, provided support networks for women, campaigned for specific legislation, all in an effort to make their city respectable. In doing so, they played significant roles in shaping and maintaining urban culture in Spokane. But they had done so while wrapping themselves in the cloak of respectable womanhood, defined by white middle class values.

Religiosity emboldened Spokane’s WCTU members to speak out on suffrage. Between February and early June of 1898, they were the only club women to discuss their views on the upcoming amendment with a newspaper reporter. They were city’s most visible suffragists and they seemed to many skeptics, to be the only women who had any use for the ballot.¹¹

But the WCTU suffragists were not alone, because a variety of people in Spokane expressed an interest in woman suffrage. The first indication of this appeared in the newspapers in June of 1898. Women from throughout the Pacific Northwest had gathered in the city for the second annual meeting of the Washington State Federation of Women’s Clubs. The organization’s leaders had avoided making suffrage a membership requirement, publishing a program that made no mention of it.¹² Suffrage was an ever-present topic, however, because individual speakers could and did bring it up.¹³ Likewise, Abigail

¹⁰ “Praying For Success” *The Chronicle*, February 25, 1898, 7

¹¹ “Spokane’s WCTU Talks of Suffrage” *The Chronicle*, April 8 1898, 4.

¹² “Unity in Diversity” *The Chronicle* June 7, 1898, 7:1. See also, “Women Who Think” *The Chronicle*, June 4, 1898, 5. Bessie Savage explained, “We have a rule that neither politics nor religion shall be brought into the meetings of the clubs, but it has been very difficult to keep out references this suffrage campaign for the women are so much interested in it.” “Spokane Women Will Organize” *The Chronicle*, June 17, 1898, 5.

¹³ Dr. Marmora’ De Voe’s paper, “Civic Problems” concluded that giving women the right to vote would help rectify many contemporary problems. “Want the Ballot” *The Spokesman-Review* June 16, 1898, 5.

Scott Duniway took prominent role throughout. One reporter explained, “She is a fluent talker and this combined with her ready wit makes her frequent brief remarks of much interest.”¹⁴

Once the Federation meetings were officially over, the subject of women voting could be more directly addressed, and a number of supporters gathered on Friday, June 17. Washington suffragists Bessie Isaac Savage and Mrs. Homer Hill led out.¹⁵ Hill outlined a campaign procedure that the statewide organization recommended. They would establish a club in each of the city’s wards, thereby distributing the work, and finding every vote that was “honestly for suffrage.” Then a citywide committee would be appointed to be a liaison for funds and information between Spokane suffragists and the state committee.¹⁶ Before concluding the meeting, the group appointed a committee charged with launching the process.

Two members of this committee were established leaders in local and regional temperance organizations. Lida M. Ashenfelter, a club woman who had served as the president of the WCTU Central Union in 1894, had probably been a member of that organization and prohibitionist for most of the decade. A second, Mrs. Rose H. Winstead was active in a local temperance group, and was also one of two officers from Spokane serving on a regional parent organization.¹⁷ A third member, Miss Florence N. Kent was the principal of a school. A career woman, Kent, may have been an advocate, but she was not a leader in any of the local temperance clubs.

The temperance/suffragists had other allies, however. On the following Monday, Spokane’s mayor, along with fifteen other prominent citizens, signed a letter that was published in the *Spokesman Review*, inviting Duniway to “favor us with one of your indomitable lectures . . .” Before leaving town the next day, she responded in print, promising to return to Spokane in early September to speak about the “Basis of Woman’s Claim to the Ballot,” and further pledging to donate two months of her time to Washington’s equal suffrage campaign just prior to the November election. She closed with a classic example of her ‘still hunt’ philosophy, asserting that she did not need to coach the “chivalrous” voters in Washington, but to prove that “a ‘woman’s reason’ is much more than a mere ‘because.’”¹⁸

¹⁴ “Want the Ballot” *Spokesman Review*, June 16, 1898, 5.

¹⁵ Duniway attended the meeting also, and predicted the campaign in Spokane would be “short, sharp, and pleasant.” “Spokane Women Will Organize” *The Chronicle*, June 17, 1898, 5.

¹⁶ “Spokane Women Will Organize” *The Chronicle*, June 17, 1898, 5.

¹⁷ Spokane City Directory, Polk: 1894 and 1896.

¹⁸ “She Can Not Lecture Now” *Spokesman Review*, June 22, 1898, 3.

That same week the first hint appeared in print that there might be remonstrants in Spokane. On Monday, June 21, *The Chronicle* published a letter from the Anti-suffragist Association of the Third Judicial District of the State of New York. The organization's president, Anna Parker Pruyn wrote, "I infer from a recent paragraph from your excellent newspaper that no organized effort has yet been undertaken to defeat the vote on woman suffrage . . ." ¹⁹ She offered to send a distinguished speaker, Mrs. W. Winslow Crannell to the state to "help organize [antis], and speak when necessary." ²⁰

Pruyn did not explain how she had come across the *Chronicle* article, but she left the impression that there were anti-suffragists in the city who had sent it to her. This could have been a ploy devised by the New York remonstrants to identify sympathetic editors and gain a place in the discussion over the upcoming suffrage amendment in Washington. More likely, however, there were women in Spokane, as well as in Seattle and in Olympia, quietly making sure that the polished easterners got an invitation to lend a hand in Washington.

Rather than initiating a visible war between suffragists and remonstrants, however, this stand by the New York based antis made only a ripple in Spokane's press. A week later, Florence Kent reported to *The Chronicle* that the suffragists had met and decided not to do anything about organizing wards during the summer months. She explained, "You see, in Spokane for the next month a large proportion of the ladies . . . will be out of the city. They go away on camping and other summer excursions, and will not be here to do much work." ²¹ She went on to predict that the remainder of the summer would be too hot, so they had determined to earnestly take up the cause again in September.

The predominantly white, middle class suffragists "went to the lake," along with just about everyone else in the city that had the time, and could afford to do so. This summer hiatus had become a tradition in Spokane, begun during the 1880s as trains had made regional travel quicker and more widely accessible. In July and August of 1898, society pages in the daily papers were naming the people who

¹⁹ She was reacting to Hill's assertion that she had heard of no one in the state working against the suffragists. "To Fight Equal Suffrage" *The Chronicle*, June 21, 1898, 7.

²⁰ Crannell had taken the anti's message to both the Democratic and Republican national political conventions in 1896, and had garnered praise for her lady-like speeches.

²¹ "Suffrage in Spokane" *The Chronicle*, June 29, 1898, 6.

went, specifying to which lake they had gone, giving examples of what they would be doing there, and stating how long they would be out of town.²²

On August 26, as the *Chronicle* announced that “Society Quits the Lakes,” Mrs. Homer Hill arrived back in town.²³ She excitedly told newspaper representatives that the suffragists in Washington were enjoying better than expected progress. When the reporter asked where they had been successful, she answered, “All over the state—almost everywhere except in Spokane. Here practically nothing has been done and there are only eight weeks left for the campaign.”²⁴ She went on to describe the activities going on in other parts of the state, then said, “We hope to do this in Spokane, but first the suffragists of this city need to be aroused and organized.”

Spokane suffragists responded by meeting with Hill that night. They organized committees to canvass two wards of the city, and promised to have the other three established within a week. They then instructed each ward club to contact all of the ladies living there, and ask them to sign a petition requesting that the voters support the proposed suffrage amendment.

Hill organized two more wards before she had to return to Seattle five days later. During that meeting, representatives of the second ward happily reported the initial results of their canvass: twenty-seven women favored the amendment, with only one against it.²⁵ The *Chronicle* expressed its surprise in a subheading that read “Startling Results of the Suffrage Canvass in This City.”

But if the Spokane suffragists got a late start, opponents of the measure seemed invisible. The same *Chronicle* article that had announced the initial results of the canvass declared that the antis were asleep. The writer then added, a bit hopefully, that perhaps some would surface during a debate scheduled for the following Friday, September 3.

If that debate happened, it failed to provide any further indication of the identity of the city’s remonstrants. On the following Monday, a still mystified *Chronicle* editor announced, that “at last” the anti-suffragists were doing something.²⁶ They were mailing circulars to voters, predicting that giving women the ballot would degrade them and go against an “organic law” that held a woman should not “take

²² Even the matron of the Home of the Friendless gathered up some twenty-five of her young charges and headed for Idaho’s Silver Lake. “Society’s Gossip” *The Chronicle*, August 8, 1898, 6.

²³ “Society Quits the Lakes” *The Chronicle*, August 26, 1898, 5.

²⁴ “She Hopes to Vote” *The Chronicle*, August 26, 1898, 7.

²⁵ “It’s All One Way” *The Chronicle*, August 31, 1898, 7.

the place of a man in every position in life.” But this first move by the antis appeared from nowhere. The article explained that opponents to the amendment seemed “to be running a sort of masked battery and keeping themselves out of sight.” The only reference to the pamphlet’s origin was in the enigmatic phrase, “Printed for the Protesters, 1898.”²⁷

The pamphlet may have come from outsiders, such as anti-suffragists in New York or Boston who had already joined the debate about suffrage in Washington. But it seems likely that the women allied with Anna Parker Pruyn and Elizabeth Crannell would have cited their organization in the pamphlet. They were not afraid to identify themselves as anti-suffragists, and they were confident that most women shared their sentiments. Moreover, their purpose in targeting Spokane was to help women organize, not to send anonymous circulars to voters.

The Nevada Bloomer legal case, which had begun its journey through Washington’s courts in Spokane ten years earlier, raises another possibility.²⁸ With that case, liquor interests in the city had legally tied suffrage up beginning in 1888 and prevented it from becoming a part of the Washington State Constitution that had been established in 1890. Although a decade had elapsed since Nevada Bloomer filed the original lawsuit, saloon owners and beer bottlers in the city still believed that all woman suffragists were prohibitionists. Just as in the Bloomer case, where a remonstrant, Nevada Bloomer, joined with local liquor interests to challenge suffrage in Washington territory, it is likely that a loose, unorganized, coalition of liquor interests and remonstrants in Spokane were behind the anonymous pamphlet.

If this lateral move by the “antis” disconcerted members of Spokane’s newly organized suffrage committees, they pushed on without official comment. By the third week in September, the ward clubs presented their signed petitions to the delegates who were heading to the Republican State convention. Then with the signatures sent on their way, they happily reported to *The Chronicle* that suffrage organizations had been successfully formed in four of the city’s five wards.

²⁶ “Do Women Want to Vote?” *The Chronicle*, September 6, 1898, 6.

²⁷ “Do Women Want to Vote?” *The Chronicle*, September 6, 1898, 6.

²⁸ John Fahey, “An Obedient Wife Played a Key Role in Delaying Women’s Suffrage in Washington” *Columbia Magazine*, 42, summer, 1988, 42-5. See also, Thomas J. Jablonsky, *The Home, Heaven, and Mother Party*, Scholarship in Women’s History Series, Rediscovered and New, v 6, editor Gerda Lerner, Carlson Publishing Inc., 1994.

The third ward had been the least cooperative. A few women there had apparently signed the petitions, but only one was willing to actively promote suffrage.²⁹ Looking closer at this area gives glimpses of the type of women who were most unlikely to join a suffrage organization. This ward included “Peaceful Valley,” an area lying along the Spokane River at a low point. Since the earliest days the city’s existence, it had been home to the poorest classes of people, and its name had only recently been changed from “Poverty Flats.” Women who lived in this lower portion of the ward struggled to help their families survive. They also may have been sympathetic to liquor interests because during the tough years that had followed the panic of 1893, the saloons in Spokane had opened their doors, each sheltering as many as fifty destitute people a night.³⁰

Separated by a steep bank from the valley, lay upscale homes of the newly wealthy. Some who lived in this area had possessed enough capital to weather the recent depression, and profit from it. Others had benefited from the region’s railroad, mining, and banking industries. The women there were either antis, or they simply had no interest in canvassing the ward.

But if most of the well to do women in Spokane had no time for suffrage, those who had actually volunteered for ward organizations struggled. No suffrage news reached the *Chronicle* editor during the first ten days of October. On the 11th of the month, a short article quoted excerpts taken from a pamphlet published by the “antis” in New York. While introducing the selection, the writer mused that the New Yorkers must realize “that the antis in this state are not doing anything.”³¹ Three days later, the paper asked, “Are the women Asleep?”³² A “dense calm” had settled in Spokane, the promised public meetings had failed to materialize, and there was no evidence of “quiet persuasion” going on. The article concluded, “If the suffragists or the anti-suffragists of Spokane are doing anything at all they are wonderfully still.”

This announcement apparently spurred someone to action. On October 17 a pamphlet published by the statewide association and mailed to voters in Spokane by local supporters of the amendment elicited the headline, “Mean Trick by Suffragists.” With begrudging admiration, *The Chronicle* exclaimed, “The idea of hunting up what a fellow said 14 years ago and quoting it to him today shows just how much these

²⁹ “For Equal Suffrage” *The Chronicle*, September 22, 1898, 8.

³⁰ Orville Pratt, “The Spokane Story” unpublished manuscript, 1948.

³¹ “Don’t Want to Vote” *The Chronicle*, October 11, 1898, 3.

³² “Are the Women Asleep?” *The Chronicle*, October 14, 1898, 7.

women know about western politics . . .”³³ The pamphlet had reprinted excerpts from papers across the state that had given favorable evaluations to the results of women voting in Washington territory in 1883. The suffragists hoped to make a point to the editors of those papers, many of whom were, despite their formerly positive assessment of women voting, opposing the proposed amendment in 1898.

Then Elizabeth Crannell arrived in Spokane, announcing her presence at the local editor’s offices.³⁴ From Albany, New York, she was making good on Pruyn’s previous offer to send an organizer to the city. She explained that fellow remonstrants in the city were too busy with their home and charitable duties to campaign against suffrage. But she was in Spokane to help out.

The Chronicle editor told of Crannell’s arrival on the front page, quoting part of a conversation she had had with a reporter. She insisted that she would never have come to the state if there hadn’t been women in Washington who invited her, then added that some of those invitations had come from women in Spokane. But when pushed for further detail, she refused to give any names, explaining “Of course, you understand the ladies are reluctant to come out against this movement, for whenever a woman does so it makes her liable to the vilest sort of attacks.”³⁵

Two days later, Crannell reported that she was well satisfied with the number of remonstrants that she had found in the city. Claiming they were much more plentiful than she had been led to believe, she insisted the anti-suffragists had not been idle, “but they are doing a vigorous work in the quiet, unostentatious way that we, who oppose suffrage, approve of.”³⁶ Crannell then told of one woman in Spokane who insisted that she would, if forced to, vote against anyone who had supported woman suffrage.

The presence of such a high profile anti-suffragist in Spokane prompted the Second ward suffragists to report the latest results of their canvass. On October 24, Lillie Steeper told *The Chronicle* that they had found 400 women who supported the amendment, and just 15 opposed. When a reporter asked her for the names of the remonstrants there, she responded “we started out to take the names of these, but they were so few we thought it scarcely worth the trouble.”³⁷ What is more, she added, their canvassers had found only two anti-suffragists during the last two days. When asked if she had seen evidence of

³³ “Mean Trick by Suffragists” *The Chronicle*, October 17, 1898, 7.

³⁴ “She Wants No Ballot” *The Chronicle*, October 20, 1898, 1.

³⁵ “She Wants No Ballot” *The Chronicle*, October 20, 1898, 1.

³⁶ “Will Beat Equal Suffrage” *The Chronicle*, October 22, 1898, 8.

³⁷ “For Equal Suffrage” *The Chronicle*, October 24, 1898, 2.

Crannell's work, Steeper responded, "None whatever." Then, as if to underscore her assertion, a brief paragraph tucked below the article explained that the New Yorker had left for Seattle that morning.

But if the "antis" in Spokane lost their only spokesperson when Crannell headed for Seattle, the "still hunt" continued during the last two weeks before the Election Day. Local suffragists told reporters that they had faithfully adhered to the plans that Hill had outlined in late June.³⁸ And WCTU members met with a local minister who was opposed to the amendment because he had been disappointed that women had not been better prohibitionists when Washington Territory had given them the ballot for a time.³⁹ These suffragists assured him that they were eager to vote against liquor interests.

The remonstrants' activity is more difficult to trace. On October 29, *The Chronicle* announced the formation of a new club for women.⁴⁰ The anti-suffragists, it explained, would soon establish a society. But the article failed to mention why the editor thought this had been the case. Two days later the paper explained that there had been rumors a local anti suffrage organization was already in place.⁴¹ But despite having offered to shield the identity of any anti-suffragists from the public, it had been unable to gather any "information as to their plans." "Meanwhile, west of the mountains," *The Chronicle* went on sounding a bit discouraged, "Mrs. Crannell continues to battle single-handed . . ."

Suffragists in Spokane took advantage of these doubts, by attacking Crannell in the press. On November 3 two letters appeared in *The Chronicle*, and the first correspondent was the wife of a prominent judge in Moscow, Idaho. She criticized the New York remonstrant for neglecting her own home, and thus betraying the very ideals that she and her fellow antis stood for, in order to fight suffrage in the West. Further, she warned that Crannell and her fellow antis were unknowingly "working in the interests of the 'National Liquor Dealers Association.'" A local suffragist, Mrs. O. H. Bowen, wrote to counter the anti's claims about the poor performance of suffrage in states where women already had the ballot. She optimistically claimed that "twenty-five years" of women's votes in Idaho had helped "banish crime, pauperism and vice from that state." This pioneer to Spokane closed with a parting shot, asking "Where is Mrs. Crannell, who thought Seattle on the eastern boundary of Washington?"⁴²

³⁸ "Still Hunt For Suffrage" *The Chronicle*, October 31, 1898, 7.

³⁹ "Ladies will Call on Him" *The Chronicle*, October 26, 1898, 2.

⁴⁰ "New Club for Women" *The Chronicle*, October 29, 1898, 3.

⁴¹ "Still Hunt For Suffrage" *The Chronicle*, October 31, 1898, 3.

⁴² "Women on the Warpath" *The Chronicle*, November 3, 1898, 7.

The following day the newspaper focused on antis, declaring “There is such a club—Mrs. W. Winslow Cranell says so.” And “nobody doubts that wide-awake lady’s information on anything that has to do with anti-suffrage plans.” The paper then reprinted Crannell’s letter asserting that a skeleton group had already been formed, and predicting that there would soon be “an astonishingly large anti-suffrage association” in Spokane.⁴³ It had not yet been organized yet, she explained, because her top priority at the moment was to campaign against the amendment. As soon as the voters in Washington defeated it, she promised to turn her attention to organizational tasks.

On Saturday, November 5, with only two days remaining before Election Day, the suffragists again dominated the paper debate. The second ward reported its final canvass results, 450 for equal suffrage and 25 against. The reporter speculated that “some of the most aggressive suffragists “would be at the polls next Tuesday to remind their friends to vote on the suffrage amendment.”⁴⁴

On the day before the election Abigail Scott Duniway finally checked back in with the citizens in Spokane who had invited her to speak several months earlier. She had been following Crannell’s progress in the region, and disapproved of her methods, asserting that the anti-suffragist had been telling voters which way to vote. So Duniway had decided that, “it was better to leave the question to be settled voluntarily, by the liberty-loving and chivalrous men of the pious young state of Washington.”⁴⁵

Election Day, November 8, found the weather cold and wet, and the city of Spokane relatively quiet. Republicans and Populists escorted voters to the polls in banner-bedecked carriages, and some candidates and their friends were out urging voters to the polls.⁴⁶ But the suffragists were staying out of the cold and depending on the city’s voters to do the “right” thing.

Not all was quiet on the suffrage front, however. Already feeling pressure from local prohibitionists, liquor interests were making one last effort to see that women would not vote against them. Saloons there had generally observed a recently enacted city ordinance by closing their front doors on Election Day, and most had even left the side doors locked. But some drink enthusiasts got around this unwelcome restriction by freely circulating a bottle at polling places. And in the downtown precincts

⁴³ “That Anti-Suffrage Club” *The Chronicle*, November 4, 1898, 8.

⁴⁴ “Straw Ballot on Suffrage” *The Chronicle*, November 5, 1898, 5.

⁴⁵ “Shall Women Vote” *Spokesman Review*, November 7, 1898, 5.

⁴⁶ “Election Day in Spokane” *The Chronicle*, November 8, 1898, 5. See also “Was a Quiet Election” *Spokesman Review*, November 9, 1898, 5.

where the saloons were concentrated, placards urged a “vote against woman suffrage,” and explained “With the WCTU as leaders in the movement it means prohibition.”⁴⁷

With 74% of the votes tabulated, the November 9 *Chronicle* announced that Spokane County had defeated the amendment. Forty-one precincts had voted no, and only six, all lying outside of the city limits, had given a majority to suffrage. Across the county the measure had gained only 35% of the vote, and that number fell within the city limits to 31%. Men from the second ward, where Lillie Steeper had reported finding 450 women in favor of suffrage and only 25 opposed, defeated the amendment 536-217.⁴⁸ In the third ward, where just one woman had been interested enough to serve on a suffrage club, only 18% of voters supported giving women the ballot. The first, fourth and fifth wards, where suffragists had organized but had failed to report to the papers any results of canvasses, gave from 32-38% in support of the amendment. And despite a boom that more than doubled the city’s population between 1890 and 1900, roughly two hundred fewer people voted for suffrage in 1898 than had done so in 1889.⁴⁹

A closer examination of the two wards with the poorest showing suggests at least three factors influencing the vote on suffrage in 1898: socio-cultural differences, economic status, and the close link in voter’s minds between suffrage and prohibition. In the second ward, Lillie Steeper had reported on October 24 that suffragist canvassers had covered the region south of Riverside Avenue.⁵⁰ But the ward extended further, encompassing the heart of the city’s business district. Not only were living arrangements in that portion of the ward vastly different from the family residences further south, but a large number of saloons dominated the section.⁵¹ The anti-suffrage placards posted by liquor interests on Election Day appeared in this portion of the second ward.

In the Third ward, socio-economic status played a large role. The newly wealthy who had settled in grand homes in the higher elevations of this ward were either uninterested in suffrage, or preoccupied with replicating their newly acquired economic achievements in the social realm. On the other extreme, the

⁴⁷ “Was a Quiet Election” *Spokesman Review*, November 9, 1898, 5.

⁴⁸ “No Ballot for Women” *The Chronicle*, November 9, 1898, 1.

⁴⁹ “Suffrage Gain” *The Chronicle*, December 8, 1898, 8.

⁵⁰ “For Equal Suffrage” *The Chronicle*, October 24, 1898, 2.

⁵¹ Margaret Cowles estimated that in 1890 there was one saloon for every twenty people living in the city. Unpublished Lecture to the Spokane Genealogical Society, oral history transcribed by John C. Ellingson, Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture, January 7, 1989.

city's poorest residents still lived in Peaceful Valley, which had shortly before been known as Poverty Flats. The hand to mouth conditions they struggled with left no time for suffrage.

Adding to these complications, the suffrage still hunt in Spokane was anything but a model campaign. Supporters began organizing late, and then waited out the summer of 1898, before getting down to business. Additionally, some vocal advocates brushed off Duniway's warnings against taking up the prohibitionist cause, and freely discussed their intentions to use the vote to "slay the dragon" of liquor. The Suffragists' task was to convince voters that women's roles should be changed.⁵² They had attempted this, but their efforts were too little and too late.

In contrast, the remonstrants only had to promote maintaining the status quo. The people that had been behind the anonymous anti-suffrage pamphlet really did not have to disclose their identity. And on Election Day local liquor interests' opposition could be more open, so the anti suffragists did not need to take to the streets. Finally, club women who were suffragists knew more than they let on to the press about the remonstrants' identities, but they saw no benefit in informing the public who the anti-suffragists were. Thus, the 1898 "Still Hunt" in Spokane proved extremely still, and more effective for the remonstrants than it was for the suffragists.

⁵² For more information on the mind-set anti-suffragists, see Jane Jerome Camhi, *Women against Women: American Anti-Suffragism, 1880-1920*, Scholarship in Women's History: Rediscovered and new, editor, Gerda Lerner, Brooklyn, New York: Carlson Publishing, Inc., 1994.