

The Newark Advocate, February 16, 1895.

“Woman’s Suffrage

Views of Newark Women on the Question

The consideration of which is brought to their attention by the passage of the recent law regarding the election of members of the School Board the coming spring.

In view of the fact that legislation has opened the polls to woman’s ballot, it may be of interest to learn the opinions of some of Newark’s representative women on the suffrage question. The spring election is not far distant, and in that election women residing in the first, third and seventh wards of our city, will be entitled to exercise the right of franchise on the school question.

It is undoubtedly true that woman would have relegated to an indefinite future, the enfranchisement of her sex, if she had choice in the matter. She has not clamored for ‘rights’ nor has she begged to vote; and lying close to the heart of the woman of today is the question – do I derive the highest good from the endless rights and privileges which I now enjoy? She realizes more acutely than do men that her past training and environments, have not been of a nature to fit her for the grave responsibility which the ballot brings. Through countless ancestors it has been borne in upon her, that home is her sphere, and that her freedom is confined to the narrow limitations of the home circle.

But the age is progressive; conditions have changed; man has opened the doors of a larger freedom to her, and she is suddenly expected to walk, before she has learned to stand without his support. It is, therefore, not remarkable if woman is inclined to shrink from the responsibility of voting, and to sniff ungratefully the atmosphere of the polls. Her ballot upon questions bearing upon the schools is not a matter of voice; man’s legislation has brought the responsibility to her; it is his tribute to motherhood, to woman’s purity and intelligence, and to her ability to seek out the defect in our educational systems and school laws, and to apply the remedy. It would seem, if the better classes – the educated women, and the great mother class – refuse to vote, that they will be the unfortunate means of defeating the very object for which such legislation was enacted – the advancement of education and the welfare of our children.

We may feel very sure that the low class of women, will act conjointly with the same class of men, that their combined strength will be pitted against the man who represents our best citizens, and the educational interests of our city: and if the intelligent wives, mothers and daughters do not vote, *they* will place our educational interests in the hands of a class from whom nothing but evil results may be expected.

Truly the subject of suffrage on questions pertaining to the schools, comes to woman clothed in the garb of duty, and bearing close and intimate relations to the hearth and home.

The following interviews of women of this city, voice their sentiments upon this subject.

Reporter – ‘Do you believe in woman’s suffrage?’

Mrs. J. M. Graham – Well, yes, I do. I have come to it. Every school board should have women representatives; they understand the needs of children better, and are more deeply interested in their

education than are men. Every woman who works in a philanthropic line, comes to believe in woman's suffrage sooner or later.

Mrs. S. F. Brown - I certainly do believe in woman's suffrage. It would be the means of elevating the school work; it was done in Iowa, and the men admitted it. If we want prohibition of the liquor traffic, we must accept suffrage.

Mrs. A. A. Keller – Wants to vote on the school question, and thinks women should concentrate their strength and vote for the best man.

Mrs. Hoagland – would like to vote this spring, and prophesies that nothing but good will grow out of woman's vote. Eventually the result for which women have prayed will come – better environment for children and the home.

Mrs. M. E. Baugher – Expects to vote, and thinks that woman's ballot will be the means of electing purer men to office.

Anna M. Pollock – Since woman is the greater sufferer from the rum cause I believe that she should be entitled to universal suffrage and to use her influence in closing the dram shops.

Miss Lucy Connell – I am not a universal suffragist. I do believe women should vote at municipal elections and for school directors.

Mrs. A. E. Bancroft – believes in universal suffrage.

Mr. Bourner – How better could a mother secure the highest welfare of her children, than by casting her vote for the best man or woman to serve on the school board?

Mrs. Milton R. Scott – I have given universal suffrage very little thought, but I think school suffrage all right.

Miss Almira Anderson – I would like to see women elected to the school board. We shall never have prohibition of the liquor traffic and the enforcement of municipal laws until woman's ballot brings them.

Mrs. Lingafelter – I am not in favor of women voting; that question should have been considered before the negro was enfranchised. I am delighted that I am a woman, and am willing to be taken care of so far as voting is concerned. School and property laws are good. If widows own property men should vote for them; and if they do not they will have all they can do to care for themselves, and have no time to waste on politics.

Mrs. Stedem – believes that no where would the purity of woman's influence be more felt than in the management of public affairs; to the question, 'would you favor women holding office?' Mrs. Stedem replied: 'Why not? The highest offices of all the great nations of ancient and modern times have been filled by women. England is today ruled by a model queen and an exemplary mother.'

Mrs. Joseph Swartz – does not favor the suffrage question, but thinks woman achieves her greatest distinction, and her highest pleasure, in the home circle.

Mrs. Mary Miller – A woman is out of her place at the polls. While her qualification from an intellectual standpoint is equal to man's, her domestic duties bar her from taking an active part in politics.

Mrs. Margaret Derrick – I favor woman's suffrage in one respect only: As government exists for the protection of property, women owning real estate should have the privilege of voting in matters of local government.

Mrs. J. W. Mannion – I think women have enough duties and responsibilities, and should leave politics to men. 'Do you think the better social element will be represented at the polls?' Yes, the fashionable element will be at the polls, because it is going to be the fashion to vote.

Mrs. Thomas Kean – Most emphatically, no. But if forced upon us, I shall do my duty.

Mrs. Justian Gleichauf – I do favor school suffrage and think that woman's vote would elevate and purify politics. 'The right to vote would mean the right to be voted for, would you favor women as candidates for office?' I would not. I place the limit at that point, for that would be detrimental to their home affairs.

Mrs. John Carroll – I am a non-believer in woman's suffrage and am quite willing to leave the responsibility of voting to men.

Mrs. Frank Hall – I favor woman's suffrage as regards the laws pertaining to the government of children and property, and I do not believe woman would unsex herself by taking an interest in public affairs.

Mrs. A. C. Hatch – Thinks it is woman's duty to vote on the school question, since the polls have been thrown open to her ballot; but believes that woman is not physically strong enough to do the work which universal suffrage would entail upon her.

Mrs. John McCune – I think a great many women will lack the moral courage to vote; that school and temperance reforms must be effected by women, and that organized club women are the ones to do it.

Mrs. Albert Porter – Co-education has proved very beneficial; co-voting so to speak, will prove as successful, if the educated women will wield their influence, and great benefits will result to our children. Woman's present position in Ohio as property owner is ridiculous in the extreme: she can have no voice in municipal elections, but is expected to meekly pay her taxes.

Mrs. Frank Grandstaff – I do not advocate woman's suffrage. Woman's sphere is her home.

Mrs. Abram Miller – thinks that woman would not be benefitted by the right to vote; that it will degrade her and will not serve to elevate man; that woman's place is in her home.

Mrs. Grace Fleek – does not favor woman's suffrage. She thinks if women vote the temperance question only would interest them. And in her mind those laws are good only if enforced.

Mrs. E. B. Jones – a woman is never so womanly to me as when she presides in her own domain – home.

Mrs. J. M. Swartz – I'm for it. In regard to the school questions I think women should vote. That is a good cause, and I want to help it along. I think the average woman more intelligent and conscientious than the average man, and she will not always vote as her husband does.

Mrs. Sampson – it is a question to which I have given little attention, but I believe that woman ought to have the right to vote so far as she can help in the matter of temperance, and ought to exercise some control in our common schools. I am not an extremist and do not care for full franchise.

Mrs. T. M. Ball – I am not in favor of woman's suffrage. I think if a woman takes care of her home she has enough to do. I wouldn't care if I had a man or two to help me.

Mrs. M. O. Nash – I am decidedly opposed to woman's suffrage. I do not wish to vote on any question.

Miss Hattie Jones – Yes, I'm a strong woman's rights woman. To keep us from voting is a species of slavery, and slavery, with all other superstitions and barbarisms, should be relegated to the past. I am discouraged because I can't vote next spring.

Miss Carrie Ball – I should like to help on the temperance questions, and as to the School Board, I think woman should be represented there.

Mrs. Willis Fulton – you ask my opinion of woman's suffrage. Woman herself has always been against its realization. Where she is sovereign in her own home, it would seem ungrateful for her to be dissatisfied: but how about the other homes where the crimes of licensed liquor, like Macbeth's blood spots, will not wash out? Women are slow and reluctant to assume this new responsibility. Woman's suffrage has long been a target for sarcasm by the cultured. Prejudice has long weighed it down; but emancipation springs from the religion of Jesus Christs; and with a firm father in that religion we will march in a solid phalanx and cast our votes against all enemies of the home, especially the arch-enemy: the saloon.

Miss Ann White – I am an advocate of woman's suffrage in local matters. I am so sorry that I cannot vote next spring. Is there a house to let in one of those wards where women can vote?

Miss Emily Moore – I do think women should vote, especially in local elections. I do not believe in taxation without representation. I was confirmed in this belief by a colored man whom I was teaching to read. He came to take his lesson after an election and told me how he had intended voting one ticket by hand, in his ignorance, voted that of the opposing party. If foreigners and ignorant negroes vote, women should have the same right. And I feel sure that, given a chance, women would combine against the saloon and would root out much of the corruption now existing in public affairs.

Miss Laura Jones – I think that even the woman who 'never wanted to vote' will look upon it as a duty to cast her ballot on questions bearing on school and home, when once the polls are open to her. That she is to be a power in purifying politics is forecast, don't you think when in the editorial columns of one of our dailies it urges the nomination of good men for the School Board because all women are sure to vote for the best man on either ticket?

Mrs. Chas. Kibler – I favor woman's suffrage on school and temperance questions. It would seem right and just for educated women to have a voice in local politics rather than uneducated men.

Miss Kidd – I have slowly come to the conclusion that woman's vote would affect important and much needed changes in our government.

Mrs. Archie Knox – I don't believe in it at all; women ought not to vote, even on the school question. I am sure though if they did, we should have cleaner streets.

Mrs. Joseph G. Wallace – women should vote on school bearing questions, but no others. The polls are repulsive; but the Australian system renders it possible for women to approach them.

Mrs. John Fulton – I am in favor of women voting on the school question, and think the effect on the city government would be good if they were to vote on all local questions.

Mrs. Perry Rank – It may be permissible for woman to vote on the school question, but I hope she will not get in to politics generally; it will tend to make her bold and mannish, where she should be refined and modest.

Mrs. D – I won't vote, I think woman's place is in the home, and when she does her duty there, she accomplishes more real good for mankind than she can do at the polls.

Mrs. A. T. Speer wants to vote because the gentleman who carries her kitchen slops votes. She owns a house and lot, and he owns a pig or two. She can speak tolerably good English, and he speaks intolerably bad Irish.

Mrs. James R. Black and Mrs. W. H. Sprague will vote on the school question but do not advocate general suffrage for women.

Mrs. H. O. Norris thinks that woman has progressed so far already that she has gotten out of her sphere, and is no longer equal to domestic duties.

Mrs. Pudegraff favors woman's suffrage; she believes that women will elevate politics.

Miss Mary A. Sprague's opinion on this subject is expressed in the following anecdote: On the occasion of the recent general election in Colorado, women were allowed to vote for the first time. At a banquet, at which both men and women were present, and which both men and women were present, and which was given in honor of the great Republican victory, a gentleman gave the following toast: 'To lovely woman, once she was our superior, she has now become our equal.'

Mrs. George Webb thinks every taxpayer should vote.

Mrs. E. S. Miller – I think every mother should and will vote on the school question.

Mrs. Martha Wright would not vote were the polls brought to her house.

Mrs. L. B. Wing is very much in favor of suffrage, and would vote seventeen times if she had the chance.

Mrs. Jerome Buckingham and Mrs. Willis Robbins are not in favor of woman's suffrage but are interested in temperance reform, and would vote if they were allowed, against liquor traffic.

At a recent meeting of the Investigators, the subject of woman's suffrage was discussed. The Queen of Clubs says: 'My right hand adversary led out by saying that she thought if women voted, politics would be elevated and purified thereby. I, according to rule, played second hand low, and said that I would be willing to help elect a School Board but would draw the line at that point. Third hand high, from the East end, thought there was no doubt even in the minds of men, but that within a few years women will be free to vote as they choose, and, that they certainly have not been honored by coming into prominence this year. Fourth hand wins the trick, by saying that her husband is in favor of woman's suffrage; she thinks that women have a great deal to do, and had better let politics alone.'"