



Marching for the Vote: The 1913 Woman Suffrage Procession

The Chevy Chase Historical Society continues its celebration of the centennial of the Nineteenth Amendment with its Spring 2020 lecture on the Woman Suffrage Procession of 1913. The story of this turning point in the suffrage battle will be told by historian, journalist and author Rebecca Boggs Roberts in her talk, "Marching for the Vote: the 1913 Woman Suffrage Procession." The program will be held on Sunday, March 8, at 4:00 p.m., at the Lawton Community Center, 4301 Willow Lane, in the Town of Chevy Chase. The program is free and open to the public.

On March 3, 1913, thousands marched from the US Capitol to the Treasury Building in support of the decades-long fight to amend the US Constitution to grant women the right to vote. At the head of the procession was activist Inez Milholland, who rode on top of a white horse in a flowing white cape and gold crown. Behind her stretched a long parade with nine bands, four mounted brigades, three heralds, about twenty-four floats, and more than 5,000 marchers. Organized by suffrage leader Alice Paul, the parade was a grand spectacle, the first civil rights march in the shadow of the nation's capital.

However, the parade was marred by violence perpetrated by a mostly male crowd gathered in Washington for Woodrow Wilson's inauguration the following day. The marching women were tripped, shoved, threatened and grabbed while police did little to quell the unrest or protect the marchers. Over 200 people were injured, but the marchers persisted. The parade has long been credited as the tipping point that led to the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment that guaranteed women the right to vote.

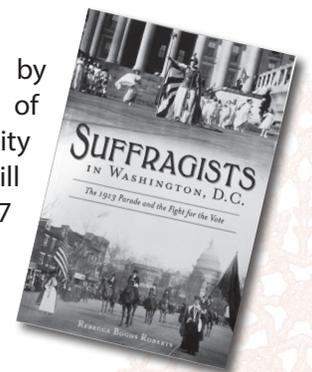
Roberts graduated from Princeton University with a degree in political science, and also holds a master's degree in physical and biological anthropology from George Washington University. She is the daughter of esteemed journalists Steve and Cokie Roberts. She is currently Curator of Programming at Planet Word, a new museum scheduled to open in downtown Washington later this year. The museum's mission is to inspire a love of words and language and to promote a literate population that can understand and address today's complex issues. Previously, she was Program Coordinator for the Smithsonian Associates and Program Director at Congressional Cemetery. She has also been a political consultant, journalist, producer and radio talk show host. She is the author of *Suffragists in Washington, D.C.: The 1913 Parade and the Fight for the Vote*, copies of which will be available for purchase and signing at the meeting.



**Rebecca Roberts to speak on the
Woman Suffrage Procession of 1913.**

The program will be followed by a reception at which light refreshments will be served. No reservations are necessary. Prior to the lecture, CCHS will hold a brief annual meeting at which the membership will elect directors-at-large. For more information about the program, contact CCHS at 301-656-6141 or info@chevychasehistory.org

Roberts' lecture will be followed by a CCHS History-Go-Round tour of the Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument on Capitol Hill on Saturday, March 28. See page 7 for details.



A Closer Look at Minnie Brooke, Chevy Chase Suffragist and Entrepreneur

By Beth Huffer and Gail Sansbury

Chicago Tribune, October 15, 1916.



Mrs. Minnie E. Brooke

In the Fall 2019 issue of the CCHS Newsletter, a brief biography of Minnie Etheridge Brooke was included in an article about Chevy Chase suffragists. In this issue, we take a closer look at Minnie's work, using newspaper accounts and documents, including letters, from the National Woman's Party Records at the Library of Congress. First, we look at the interesting way that she combined her work as the proprietor

of a popular gift shop

a public speaker; she gave outdoor suffrage lectures several times a week in Washington as well as in Maryland.

Minnie Brooke combined business with advocacy for woman's suffrage.

From 1909 to 1917, and perhaps longer, Minnie was the proprietor of a gift shop in downtown DC. The Little Art Shop was located at 1423 F Street NW, just around the corner from the Old Ebbitt Grill (though it was called the New Ebbitt Grill in this period). By 1918, her shop was located at 730 15th Street NW, and its new name was The Brooke Art Shop.

Minnie was a well-known business woman in the area, and she had a keen sense for new and unusually popular retail items. She capitalized on the new craze for sending postcards and created her own line of postcard images of the nation's capital, beautifully printed in Germany. Her postcards were popular with local residents as well as tourists. She also promoted the new practice of sending Christmas cards. In an article in *The Washington Herald* in 1915, she claimed that Christmas cards were a good alternative to a possibly unwelcome gift. But, she warned, choosing the right card for each person added the personal touch.

with her interest in organizing suffrage groups in the South. And second, we examine her participation in the 1916 suffrage demonstrations against Woodrow Wilson in Chicago, led by the National Woman's Party, a political party that arose from the work of the Congressional Union for Women Suffrage. Although she was frequently referred to in newspapers and in correspondence as "Mrs. Brooke" we will refer to her here as "Minnie."

Originally from Beaufort, North Carolina, Minniehaha "Minnie" Etheridge was a graduate of Trinity College, now Duke University. In the early 1890s she worked as a clerk for the Department of the Interior. She married Wentworth C. Brooke, who became a well-known florist and landscape designer. After living in Washington, DC, they moved to Chevy Chase, Maryland and lived on Brookville Road on the property where La Ferme Restaurant is now located. They had no children.

In addition to her paid work, Minnie was active in a variety of voluntary organizations. She was a member of the Chevy Chase Woman's Club, the Chair of the Chevy Chase Suffrage Club, and a Girl Scout leader. Over the years, her paid work included managing the Cosmos Club in Washington, DC, as well as proprietor, with her husband, of the Brooke Farm Tea Room. Her hospitality experience must have helped her plan the many convivial events she hosted for the suffrage movement, both at the Tea Room and elsewhere. Her experience as an organizer was matched by her skill as

The Day of Thoughtless Christmas Gifts Is Past



So says Mrs. Minnie E. Brooke, gift expert and suffrage speaker.

The Christmas greeting card is a solution for many givers.

But to be of value each card must be chosen to suit one to whom it is sent.

MRS. MINNIE E. BROOKE.

The Washington Herald, November 19, 1915.

In addition to cards of all sorts, her gift shop sold Kodak cameras and processed Kodak film, responding to the growing interest in photography. The gift shop also sold prints by the noted photographer Wallace Nutting, whose pastoral images were especially popular in this period.

There is no indication of how many people were employed in her shop, but someone must have minded it while Minnie traveled to meet with customers and suppliers in the winter months. It was during one of these extended business trips in early 1914 to Virginia, North Carolina, Mississippi, Tennessee, Georgia, and Alabama that she also arranged meetings with local suffragists. In particular, she promoted participation in a nationwide demonstration organized by the Congressional Union, the organization founded by Alice Paul to focus efforts on a federal suffrage amendment. The demonstration was scheduled for May 2, 1914. Paul, as Chair of the CU, and Lucy Burns, its Vice Chair, corresponded with Minnie about the event and this correspondence provides first-hand information about her efforts.

Minnie was an experienced public speaker, but she was also a skilled listener. Many of the suffrage women that she met in the South were concerned about the tension between the National American Woman's Suffrage Association, another organization fighting for a suffrage amendment to the US Constitution, and the more aggressive Congressional Union. Many were uncertain about CU's strategy and tactics. The majority of women she spoke with did not support a federal amendment. Rather, they politely let Minnie know that they wanted to proceed along their own timeline, and in concert with state-by-state efforts to achieve voting rights.

But Minnie had some successes. Reporting on a long meeting in Chattanooga, Tennessee, Minnie felt that she was able to lay the groundwork; however, she regretted that she could not stay longer.

I talked for three hours with success, as I got the promise of Miss Price to help in whatever way she could, and this greatly pleased me as she is organizing the whole state...Of course, I can only lay the foundations for this work as I am in no place long enough to follow it up...

At the end of this same letter, Minnie wrote about the "mountaineer women."

...I can tell you a whole lot about the mountaineer women when I get home. They must be helped. They know nothing but babies and work of the hardest kind,

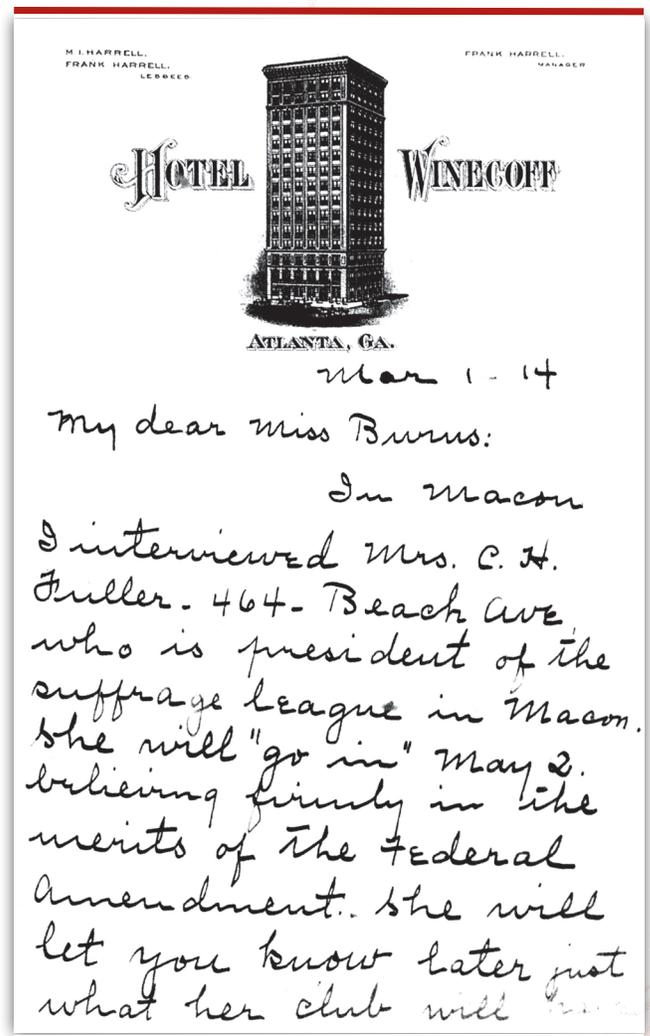
without one ray of God's Sunshine into their hearts, they simply see it with open staring [sic] eyes with no hope ahead. It breaks my heart when I think of so many little things that could come to them thru Suffrage and they don't know what the word means.

Minnie Brooke to Miss [Lucy] Burns, Macon, GA, February 27, 1914, Library of Congress

Writing from Atlanta, Georgia, in March 1914, Minnie reported continued concerns about the federal amendment. In a meeting with Mrs. Whiteside, president of the Georgia Woman's Suffrage League, Minnie was told that she could not speak about the Congressional Union's work.

[Mrs. Whiteside was] "not in sympathy with [the] amendment," and also "the people here are not ready for it." I used every persuasion – she rather seems to favor National [NAWSA as opposed to the Congressional Union]. I run up against that everywhere....

Minnie Brooke to Lucy Burns, Atlanta, GA, March 1, 1914, p. 5, Library of Congress



Letter from Minnie Brooke to Lucy Burns, Atlanta, Georgia, March 1, 1914.

Nevertheless, Minnie was successful in signing up subscriptions to *The Suffragist*, the newspaper published by the Congressional Union, and several groups agreed to participate in CU's nationwide demonstration on May 2, 1914. Upon her return to Washington, Minnie gave a speech to the CU about her recent tour of the South. On March 23, *The Washington Post* reported on her talk.

Mrs. Minnie E. Brooke, speaking before the Congressional Union yesterday afternoon, said that in her experience in the South she felt strongly the necessity of arousing the people who live there to the need of the suffrage. She maintained that this was not a question of any section, but that the prejudice of the past against suffrage must be broken and the women of the whole nation must stand together in order to obtain the franchise.

"Her Plea is to South: Women There Must Help Get Vote, Says Mrs. Brooke; Would Forget Tradition," *The Washington Post*, March 23, 1914, p 4.

In the meantime, her suffrage work caused friction with her business contacts. One of her male clients was incensed after reading a news article about her campaign against Democrats.

By the way, Miss Paul, will you kindly tell Miss [Gertrude] Crocker not to put any more articles in the paper about me campaigning against the Democratic Party? Such an article appeared in *The Charlotte Observer* and my best customer there is a leading Dem. I came near losing out on account of that. He was wild about it and had the paper on hand for me when I got in.

Minnie Brooke to Alice Paul, Augusta, GA, January 31, 1915, p. 2, Library of Congress

In November 1915, Minnie spoke about her gift shop and her work for suffrage with Merry Marshall, a columnist for *The Washington Herald*. At the end of a discussion about the rise of Christmas cards, Marshall wrote more generally about The Brooke Shop, stating that Minnie was "one of the conspicuously interesting business women of Washington." She went on to note Minnie's work for suffrage, especially her weekly street meetings for the Congressional Union.

"It was a strange thing," Mrs. Brooke said by way of commenting on her work as a suffrage speaker, "that when I began this work, I found no little real antagonism. I have a pile of letters now from old customers and friends who protested to me at the time I started out in the work, telling me just what they

thought about it. Somehow, it seemed to them that I had disgraced myself. The idea was, I suppose, that there was something beneath one's dignity in talking to men on street corners. But, why shouldn't any one who has something important to say? For these men are the same men you sit next to in the cars and in the theaters and often in church. No, my work as suffrage street speaker has brought me nothing but interesting and helpful experience. But the old prejudice is wearing off. The friends are being reconciled, and the customers are coming back. They have, apparently, ceased to be concerned about me."

Mary Marshall, "As Seen By a Washington Woman," *The Washington Herald*, November 19, 1915, p 8.

Minnie Brooke was attacked at a Chicago suffrage demonstration.



Minnie Brooke speaking in Chicago, October 1916.

In October 1916, Minnie Brooke traveled to Chicago to organize outdoor meetings that were held "in all parts of the city day and night". The Congressional Union and National Woman's Party were in Chicago to campaign and demonstrate against the reelection of President Wilson because of his opposition to nationwide suffrage. On October 19, 1916, the groups led a demonstration outside an auditorium where President Wilson was speaking, holding banners and placards with anti-Wilson slogans, such as "Wilson is against women". As chronicled in *The Washington Post* the next day, the gathering turned violent when counter-demonstrators charged the banner holders, used umbrellas and canes to destroy the signs, and knocked many of the women down. The police escorted the suffragists, many of whom had "dishveled hair and torn clothing," back to their headquarters.

Two days after the violence, Minnie wrote to fellow suffragist Gertrude Crocker about what she deemed the “wonderful riot” in Chicago, and described the group of suffrage demonstrators as “the bravest little bunch you ever perchanced to cross.” She noted that the violence started almost an hour after the peaceful demonstration began and was proud to say that not a single woman in the group shrunk away from the counter-demonstrators, “five hundred angry men swarming on the outside trying to get in.” Although Minnie was not in the center of the riot, she was attacked “nearly a square away” for wearing suffrage colors. Her “back was hurt some” and she was forced to recover for two days. Despite the violence, she closed her letter positively, writing: “It is all so exciting that I would not miss it for anything... We are making a dent, I am sure.”

Included with this letter in the National Woman’s Party Records is a copy of a telegram Minnie sent to her husband, assuring him of her safety, despite newspaper reports of the violence:

Dont [sic] worry about newspaper reports. I am O.K. and on my job[.] Our riot fierce while it lasted but no one seriously hurt. Thought possibly papers might mention me as being there so am sending this word. Left before riot began and did not see it.

Telegram from Minnie Brooke to Wentworth Brooke, Chicago, IL, October 21, 1916, Library of Congress

It is possible that Minnie’s telegram minimizes her proximity to the riot so as not to worry her husband, as her letter to Gertrude Crocker paints a different picture. When Minnie returned to the Washington area, she gave lectures about these “exciting” incidents, using them to demonstrate the perseverance of the suffragists.

Minnie continued to support the fight for women’s suffrage but there is little mention of her direct involvement with public demonstrations after the Congressional Union and the National Woman’s Party merged in 1917. It was also in 1917 that party members began to picket outside the White House and were arrested and imprisoned. One theory for Minnie’s absence from these demonstrations may be their potential to upset clients and take her away from her shop for lengthy periods of time. Whatever the reason that kept her behind the scenes, there is documentation that Minnie continued to be a member of the National Woman’s Party and support the push for a federal amendment.

The Nineteenth Amendment to the US Constitution, for which Minnie fought with such dedication, was finally passed by Congress in 1919, and ratified by the requisite number of states in 1920. Minnie died in 1938 at age 71 and is buried in Rock Creek Cemetery.

To view a slideshow of Minnie Brooke’s Historic Postcards or read more about her, visit CCHS online exhibitions at www.chevyCHASEhistory.org/chevyCHASE/exhibits. To learn more about Chevy Chase suffragists, visit the CCHS Archive and Research Center, located at 8401 Connecticut Avenue, Suite 1010. You may also email questions to info@chevyCHASEhistory.org or call 301-656-6141.



Library of Congress.

Suffragists in Chicago protesting Woodrow Wilson’s opposition to women’s suffrage, October 1916.

Minnie’s enthusiasm for her suffrage efforts shines through in this letter, despite the violent event. She includes a vivid description of the materials the “bravest little bunch” used in their demonstrations in Chicago:

We have a huge Tallyho coach with huge signs all around, WOMEN VOTERS? VOTE AGAINST WILSON, HE OPPOSES NATIONAL WOMAN SUFFRAGE. Yellow blankets on the horses, with the same on each one, purple pompons on their heads, a bugler, and we hold it and talk in the street from it. We expect to have those signs snatched to pieces.

Minnie Brooke to Gertrude Crocker, Chicago, IL, October 21, 1916, Library of Congress

History-Go-Round Tour of the Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument.

Saturday, March 21, 2020

Rebecca Roberts' lecture on the 1913 Woman Suffrage Procession organized by Alice Paul will be followed by a CCHS History-Go-Round tour of the Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument on Saturday, March 21. The tour, which takes visitors through the history of women's rights in America from the mid-1800s to today, will be led by National Park Service Rangers. It will begin at 9:30 a.m. and last approximately one hour.

This National Monument, formerly known as the Sewall-Belmont House and Museum, preserves decades of passionate work in the struggle for suffrage. The house was the home of Alice Paul and the headquarters for the National Woman's Party, founded by Paul in 1916 to further the cause of full equality for women. The site became the epicenter of the struggle for women's rights and social change.

Home to the National Woman's Party for nearly 90 years, today's museum tells the story of a community of women who dedicated their lives to the fight for women's rights. The innovative tactics and strategies these women devised became the blueprint for civil rights progress throughout the 20th century.

President Barack Obama designated the house a National Monument on April 12, 2016.



Belmont-Paul Women's History National Monument

Following the tour, interested participants will gather at the site for conversation and a snack. The price for the tour and snack is \$15. Space is limited and reservations must be paid for in advance.

Directions to the meeting point will be provided to all registrants. The museum is located on Capitol Hill at the corner of Constitution Avenue and 2nd Street NE, across Constitution from the Supreme Court. Participants will provide their own transportation. Parking in the area is limited. The site is located a short walk from Metro; from the Red line, use Union Station.

To make a reservation or for further information, please contact CCHS at info@chevyCHASEhistory.org, or at 301-656-6141.

CCHS Out and About

Out and About is an occasional feature in the Newsletter, highlighting CCHS' participation in community events. If your organization is holding an event, we'd love to be part of it. Contact CCHS at info@chevyCHASEhistory.org or 301-656-6141.

- On November 2, 2019, Gail Sansbury, CCHS volunteer and former Director of the Archive and Research Center, presented a paper at the Society for American City & Regional Planning History's National Conference on Planning History, "A New Appraisal of Landscape Architect Nathan F. Barrett (1845-1919): His Plans, Theories, and Practice." Gail discussed the ongoing survey of Barrett's work, including his plans for Chevy Chase, Maryland, and his role as a founder of the American Society of Landscape Architects.
- Beth Huffer, Director of the CCHS Archive and Research Center, spoke at the annual D.C. History Conference on November 23, 2019, on the topic "Certain Places are Private': Segregation at Chevy Chase Lake". Building on research undertaken for CCHS' online exhibit and History-Go-Round about the lake's amusement park, and using CCHS oral histories, she discussed the whites-only policy of the park that made it an exclusive entertainment venue in the early days of the new suburb.
- On January 25, 2020, Beth attended the annual Montgomery History Conference held at Montgomery College in Germantown, Maryland. The conference featured sessions on the Lyttonville community, the history and planning of the Montgomery County Agricultural Reserve, and a particularly fascinating session on the Aspin [sic] Hill Pet Cemetery.
- Beth also will serve as a judge for Montgomery County's National History Day competition on February 29, 2020, at Northwood High School. For the competition, middle and high school students use primary and secondary sources to create projects focused on this year's theme, "Breaking Barriers," in one of five formats: paper, exhibit, documentary, performance, or website. This year more than 4,000 students will compete and the winners will advance to the state level.



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8401 Connecticut Avenue
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Join CCHS for 2020!

If you have not joined CCHS or renewed your membership for 2020, please do so today. We very much want and need your support. It's because of you that we are able to operate the Archive and Research Center. You make it possible for us to collect and preserve historical documents, photographs and maps, and to take oral histories and house histories. We share the stories of our local history through twice-yearly, free public lectures on topics of historical interest, and through online exhibits on our website, chevychasehistory.org. You also help us publish this Newsletter. Can we count on you to help and continue your support?

I want to be a supporter!

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- Contact me about volunteering at the Archive and Research Center or helping with a program

Mail this to: CCHS, 8401 Connecticut Ave., Suite 1010, Chevy Chase, MD 20815
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