

**“A Bad Case of Fossilized Tradition”:
The Discourse of Race and Gender in Women’s Battle for the Ballot
In Richmond, Virginia 1909-1920**

A Thesis

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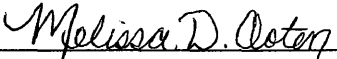
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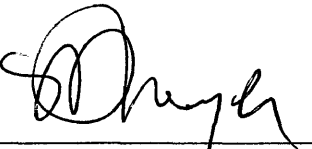
APPROVAL SHEET

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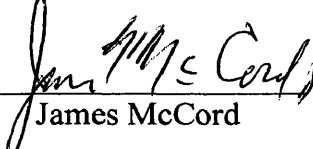

James McCord

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ABSTRACT

The organized fight for white woman suffrage spanned over seventy years, with its roots in the abolitionist movement in the North. Women held the first women's rights convention in 1848 at Seneca Falls, New York. Eighteen years later, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony formed the American Equal Rights Association and in 1878, eight years after the Fifteenth Amendment enfranchised black men, suffragists introduced a woman suffrage amendment to the United States Congress. In Virginia, the 1902 Constitution disfranchised tens of thousands of voters, primarily black men and poor white men. Despite this curtailing of the vote, middle to upper class white women in Richmond established the Equal Suffrage League of Virginia in 1909 under the leadership of Lila Valentine to promote woman suffrage throughout the state. This study examines the rhetoric surrounding women's push for the vote in Richmond as well as the issue of race that was a central component within the city's woman suffrage movement.

Both suffragists and antisuffragists strongly expressed their stances in the Richmond newspapers. The Richmond *Times-Dispatch*, a self-declared white Democratic newspaper, remained noncommittal on the issue of woman suffrage while its letters to the editors included opinions ranging from an extremely accessible ballot to one completely reserved for propertied white men. The Richmond *Planet*, the city's black newspaper, addressed suffrage more generally, usually supporting universal suffrage for all, due to the fact that most black men in Richmond could not vote at this time. These newspapers, along with the League's paper collection, provide critical evidence regarding the arguments suffragists and antisuffragists used to combat one another. They also reveal the importance of race in the suffrage debates in Richmond. Many white antisuffragists used the fear of black women voting to discount the woman suffrage movement. According to their argument, granting women the right to vote would lead to a flood of black women voting while disinterested white women would stay home, and they feared that it would reopen the issue of black men voting, an issue they had hoped had been resolved with the massive disfranchisement of black men in the rewriting of the state constitution at the turn of the twentieth century. Out of the suffrage debates in Richmond, the centrality of race to the woman suffrage movement can clearly be seen as a guiding factor in much of the rhetoric of both the suffragists and the antisuffragists.

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A BAD CASE OF FOSSILIZED TRADITION

**“A BAD CASE OF FOSSILIZED TRADITION”:
THE DISCOURSE OF RACE AND GENDER
IN WOMEN’S BATTLE FOR THE BALLOT
IN RICHMOND, VIRGINIA 1909-1920**

INTRODUCTION

“What really ails them is a bad case of fossilized tradition, added to an effete chivalry which picks up a handkerchief with one hand and slaps with the other,”¹ lamented Mrs. George Richardson, referring to the Virginia General Assembly in the editorial column of the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*. Written in the middle years of the 1910s, Richardson forcefully entered her opinion into the woman suffrage debate in Richmond. While her critique of the state legislature was neither the first nor last, the mildest or harshest, it does reflect how some suffragists viewed the men who made the laws and who continually dismissed their arguments. Unhappy with the legislators’ trivialization of woman suffrage, she took her criticisms to another source—the press. Whether she wished only to vent her anger or whether she actively sought to influence public opinion by penning a letter to the editor of her local paper, Richardson entered the debate surrounding the suffrage question and drew scathing responses from antisuffragists, supportive letters from fellow suffragists, and forever preserved her opinion in print. Undoubtedly, the antis would answer her by constructing and publicizing their own opinions of woman suffrage.²

This case study will specifically examine the suffrage debates in Richmond, Virginia in terms of both its proponents and opponents, while also looking specifically at how race figured into the woman suffrage movement in Richmond during the 1910s. The nationally organized fight for white woman suffrage spanned over seventy years. In 1848, women issued the Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions at the first women’s rights convention in Seneca Falls, New York.

Eighteen years later, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony formed the American Equal Rights Association. While that association would split three years after its birth, it reunified as the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) in 1890. The Fifteenth amendment to the Constitution, which enfranchised black men, was ratified in 1870, and in 1878, suffragists introduced a woman suffrage amendment to the United States Congress. The National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage organized in 1911 to combat the growing woman suffrage movement sweeping the country. Two years later, Alice Paul headed the Congressional Union, which would become known as the National Woman's Party in 1916. During that same year, Jeannette Rankin of Montana became the first woman elected to the United States House of Representatives. On August 26, 1920, the U.S. Congress ratified the Nineteenth amendment, retaining the identical language of the amendment first introduced more than forty years earlier. However, many nonwhite women, like their male counterparts, were denied the vote for another forty-odd years until the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. While the year 1923 saw a proposed Equal Rights Amendment introduced in Congress to eliminate gender-based discrimination, no such amendment has yet to pass.

Both the suffragists and antisuffragists invoked normative gender ideologies, but each side used these ideologies to pursue different political goals. As historian Susan Marshall cautions, "these apparent similarities . . . should not be overstated, since each side used these so-called essential feminine characteristics to pursue different political goals."³ In Virginia, both sides employed the normative idea of the Southern Lady, which promoted the idea of Southern gentleman's chivalry and

characterized the ideal Southern woman as a “lady” placed in the home by men and expected to remain there. Suffragists used the idea of women as caretakers of the home to advocate for the vote. Since women were charged with the upkeep of the family, the suffragists argued that they needed the vote to protect the family, an argument they frequently employed when addressing child labor laws.

Antisuffragists also characterized women according to their roles within the home, but they used this image to argue that women must remain at home to care for their families and to abstain completely from participatory politics.

Marjorie Wheeler, a historian who specializes in the woman suffrage movement in the South, urges historians to distinguish between “rhetoric and reality when it comes to discussions of woman’s role in southern society”⁴ in order to recognize the actual situation of most women rather than to accept uncritically the prescriptive ideal. By examining such evidence, historians can understand the positive and negative rhetoric surrounding woman suffrage, how these debates influenced their audiences, and how pro and antisuffrage discourses influenced the overall suffrage movement. This study will argue that southern suffragists were not actually challenging women’s sphere of hearth and home but, instead, had this characterization thrust on them by the antisuffragists. The suffrage discourses inscribed by Richmond’s suffragists reveal no radical departures from traditional thought. The very act of vocalizing their beliefs, given the context of southern culture, rather than the rhetoric itself, made them seem radical to the antis.

The distinctiveness of the South cannot be overlooked in a case study of the Southern city of Richmond. Wheeler highlights the unique ideology of the South as a

region, and suffrage historian Aileen Kraditor sees southern suffrage as a distinct break with the earlier association of the women's movement with abolitionism. She calls the suffrage movement a "conscious assault on ideas and institutions long accepted by most middle-class Americans."⁵ According to Kraditor, southern antisuffragists created problems that the suffragists had to solve. Antisuffragists, for instance, sometimes portrayed the suffragists as homewreckers who saw no value in children or the home. Southern suffragist historian Elna Green stresses that the values of family, community, and religion crumbled in the hands of modernization, symbolized in part by the suffrage movement. She argues that, initially, the antisuffragists organized in response to suffragists' perceived attack on women's God-ordained place in the home and that the question of race entered later. Pro-suffrage rhetoric in Richmond did not challenge the concept of woman as homemaker and mother but, rather, strategically argued that the vote would properly fit into women's accepted roles.

One of the main points of debate among historians is how both suffragists and antisuffragists used white supremacy in the suffrage debates. Suzanne Lebsack argues that the introduction of white supremacy into the suffrage debates "rests squarely on the shoulders of the antis."⁶ Supporting this perspective, Anastatia Sims stresses that the South remembered the women's movement as emerging from abolitionism and that southern antisuffragists firmly linked the rights of any woman to the rights of both black men and women. Sims argues that Southern suffragists and antisuffragists were both forced to engage with the legacy of the women's movement's emergence from the abolitionist movement, similar to ways each had to

engage with dominant gender ideologies as well. Lebsack characterizes white suffragists as occupying a “middling place”⁷ somewhere between egalitarianism and the “shrieking racism”⁸ of the antisuffragists. In Richmond, however, this wide gulf appeared to be exaggerated. Elna Green, like Lebsack, links white supremacy with the antisuffragists, thereby freeing suffragists from the label. Green asserts that outspoken southern suffragists who were blatantly racist, such as Kate Gordon, were the exception rather than the norm. She points to the antisuffrage movement, chronologically following on the heels of the black disfranchisement movement, as the villain that inserted the poison of race into the vein of woman suffrage. Regardless of who initially brought race into the woman suffrage rhetoric in Richmond, racism was inscribed in the discourses on both sides of the woman suffrage debate.

Despite the common goal of suffrage shared between white and black suffragists, little formal cooperation took place between the two during the final years of the suffrage movement that ended with granting women the vote but leaving in place restrictions that would prevent some black women from voting for decades to come. In 1916, the *Norfolk Journal and Guide* declared, “The white woman of this country has not taken one step to help safeguard the chastity of her colored sister,” concluding that “the race problem will never be solved until white and colored women work together for mutual respect and protection.”⁹ Ann Gordon, a historian of African-American women’s participation in the suffrage movement, sees racism as not merely an experience in the woman suffrage movement but as a formulated strategy of the movement.¹⁰ She reasons that “by continuing to deny the relationship

between their demand and the rights of African-American woman, suffragists moved their cause to the racist center of American politics.”¹¹ Such reasoning seems particularly accurate when considering suffragists’ arguments suggesting that woman suffrage would secure white supremacy. While black women participated in mainstream white woman suffrage organizations, they also developed their own, perhaps because of the racism encountered on a personal or institutional level or perhaps because these organizations did not adequately address the unique position of black women battling across both racial and gender divides. Although not the case in Virginia’s Equal Suffrage League, which never actively sought black support, Gordon explains how many white suffrage organizations encouraged black women to join the cause in order to court the favor (and votes) of black men, only to later abandon the disfranchised black women.¹²

Elsa Barkley Brown, a historian who has examined African-American women’s participation in the public sphere in Richmond, highlights black women’s activism growing out of their desire for full equality, although “the political and social straitjacket of Jim Crowism”¹³ constrained their participation. Brown argues that the national woman suffrage movement ultimately abandoned its mid-nineteenth century ties with abolitionism in favor of white supremacy, prompting a shift in strategy away from justice and toward expediency.¹⁴ As the woman suffrage campaign moved south, its roots in abolitionism further dissipated as conservative appeals touting woman suffrage as a balance against the votes of black men arose, a conclusion that holds true for Richmond. The black press actively promoted the work of the black community in the face of such racism. Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, an

African-American women's historian, emphasizes that the dichotomous construction portraying black women as being presented with an either/or choice regarding race and gender must be rethought. Terborg-Penn argues that the problem of race and sex plaguing black women was equally constricting, and scholars should not assume that the issue of gender necessarily negated ideals of racial solidarity. Whereas some scholars posit race as the overriding factor guiding black women, she also contends that race did not necessarily supersede gender concerns and that they could fight each equally. Some historians link black opposition to woman suffrage to black women's acquiesce to racial solidarity and the idea of placing race above gender in an effort to combat racism through a community strategy of support. Suffragist Mary Church Terrell clearly bought into no such dichotomy and saw woman suffrage as worthy of mass support from black men when she wrote in 1912 that "it is difficult to believe that any individual in the United States with one drop of African blood in his veins can oppose woman suffrage."¹⁵ Elna Green rejects racism as the major tenet of southern suffrage and characterizes the states' rights suffrage advocates as merely a minor faction that did not constitute the opinion of the majority.¹⁶ She instead emphasizes the development of a relationship between the black disfranchisement movement in the South and the subsequent antisuffrage movement. Green argues that both catered to the goals of white supremacists. In Virginia, "the antisuffragists injected race into the debate, and it eventually moved to the forefront."¹⁷

Historians differ as to why the movement in the South did not emerge in any considerable force until the 1890s, a generation or more after the Northeastern states. The campaign for woman suffrage in the Northeast had its roots deeply embedded in

abolitionism, a cause which received little support in the South. Green suggests that suffrage arrived in the South with the birth of industry, an urban working class, and colleges.¹⁸ In contrast, Marjorie Wheeler contends that race determined when the suffrage movement began in the South. By the 1890s, woman suffrage, Wheeler argues, became a possible solution to what some termed the ‘negro problem’—the issue of black enfranchisement that arrived via the federal government with the passage of the Fifteenth amendment following the Civil War. Since white women collectively outnumbered both black men and women in the South, the votes of white women could legally and permanently secure white supremacy.¹⁹ While this ‘solution’ took no account of the racial distribution within individual voting districts (nor the fact that many southern states had already disfranchised black men), suffragists repeatedly used it as a positive argument for woman suffrage in the South. Race proved to be a central, recurring theme used by both sides throughout the suffrage debates and one of utmost importance in understanding the movement, its national success, and its regional failure in Virginia.

As the issue of woman suffrage became more visible in the South, the number of exchanges between suffragists and antisuffragists intensified. In a manner similar to a game of tag, one side could say little during the ensuing decades without being immediately countered by the opposition. White, elite women’s opposition to woman suffrage in the South has been frequently studied in recent years. Eleanor Flexner, in her paradigm-establishing work from the 1950s, *Century of Struggle*, saw the anti’s main influence as their contention that the vote was a burden to women. Some anti’s argued that women, given the duties of home and childcare, would be overwhelmed if

any additional burden such as the vote was placed upon them. Flexner also points out, however, that these same antis had household help which personally relieved them from the work they claimed to be such a burden upon them.²⁰ This apparent contradiction might be explained by Sara Graham's contention that the antis were traditionalists clinging to those values which "to women, assigned the domestic and maternal functions of the family, and to men, the duties of the ballot box, the jury box, the cartridge box, and the sentry box."²¹ Anastatia Sims similarly suggests that the antis saw the vote as the initial step toward far-reaching, radical reforms across the board.²² In turn, historian Susan Marshall argues that "a conservative urban elite regarded the extension of suffrage as antithetical to its interests."²³ She believes this group of elites, already besieged with threats by laborers and new wealth, saw woman suffrage as yet another challenge to their power in Southern society. From this formulation, Marshall sees the antis' motivation primarily stemming from their own self-interest in preserving their way of life rather than as an attempt to preserve traditionalism, although these objectives were not necessarily mutually exclusive.

This case study of Richmond suffrage investigates how the suffrage movement developed in the former capital of the Confederacy during the 1910s. Newspapers provide an invaluable source for examining the residents of the city's outlook on woman suffrage. The *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, a self-declared Democratic daily, and the *Richmond Planet*, the city's leading black newspaper, both prove invaluable in charting the suffrage debates throughout the 1910s. In 1910, defending itself against accusations of favoring the woman suffrage movement, the *Times-Dispatch* insisted that it "does not lend itself to any movement and it has not

‘allied itself with the suffragette movement.’²⁴ In further defending itself, the paper asserted that “we protest that woman is far more than a thing made for the purpose of bearing and rearing children, that she is man’s equal in material form and in spiritual essence, and that . . . she can think as straight and work as intelligently as man.”²⁵

While the paper extolled men and women’s equality, it did not advocate woman suffrage, preferring to remain noncommittal. It accepted the normative and pervasive ideology of gendered spheres, that politics and the vote belonged exclusively to men.

In 1909, the *Times-Dispatch*, reporting on the suffrage movement in Baltimore, commented, “The Baltimore movement has reached a more advanced stage than in Richmond, mainly for the reason that the leaders have been at work there for a longer period.”²⁶ Suffrage leaders set out to rectify this discrepancy shortly thereafter. In that same year, suffragists established the Equal Suffrage League of Virginia with headquarters in Richmond to propel the suffrage movement forward throughout the state through its work and the work of its statewide regional offices. The Equal Suffrage League, an all-white organization headed by some of Richmond’s most prominent women, established an organizational presence dedicated to woman suffrage as it lobbied legislators, issued press releases, wrote letters to newspaper editors, and organized efforts promoting suffrage throughout Virginia.

The need to cultivate effective, persuasive public relations surrounded and often shaped rhetoric on both sides of the suffrage divide. Early in 1910, the suffragists received a barrage of negative publicity sparked by an address by President Taft, in which he expressed his views against woman suffrage. In response

to his position, one antisuffragist characterized the behavior of some suffragists by relating that “the geese began to hiss, thus proving beyond the peradventure of a doubt that they certainly could not be safely entrusted with the exercise of the suffrage which requires any degree of intelligence.”²⁷ Others decried the suffragists’ behavior toward the president as the “ungentlemanly conduct of the wallflowers” and compared their behavior to “rednecks and hillbillies.”²⁸ These antisuffragists injected the issue of into woman suffrage, thereby arguing that only the “worst” groups of women wanted the vote. Recognizing the need to salvage their image, a front-page headline announced “Women Apologize For Their Insult.” While apologizing for their lack of decorum, Dr. Anna Shaw also defended the suffragists’ actions, classifying Taft’s remarks as “neither calm nor dignified. He classed us with . . . barbarians, saying that he would not put the ballot into the hands of such people, and referred to the fear that it would be exercised by the worst groups of women.”²⁹ As this statement illustrates, suffragists repeatedly sought to craft a specific publicized image of themselves conforming to the dictates of womanly behavior and to respond to negative publicity that threatened to denigrate their integrity in the eyes of the public.

In some instances, the president of the Virginia Equal Suffrage League, Lila Valentine, wrote letters to the editors of various newspapers to directly refute previously published messages authored by the antis. Penning a response to a recent account of a Virginia Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage meeting, she revealed what she believed to be the Association’s hypocrisy in its own rhetoric and actions. By reasoning that the Association’s public meeting included women who held

political offices and encouraged women's activism, she suggested that the Association must, therefore, approve of female political speakers, sanction women holding office, and encourage the promotion of women's activism in legislation. By publicly highlighting these discrepancies between their words and their actions, Valentine sought to bring these suggestions of hypocrisy to the eyes of antisuffragists in an effort to turn antis away from this organization while simultaneously attempting to discredit it in the public eye.³⁰ By using this tactic, Valentine suggested the need to censure the antis for the same reasons the suffragists had been censured, thereby evoking a dangerous double standard.

In 1914, a series of public relations crises for the suffrage movement seemed to be erupting in the pages of the *Times-Dispatch*. As the states of the East debated the question of woman suffrage, those in the West, which had already granted this right to women, served as the gauge by which to judge the possible effects of woman suffrage. When violence erupted in Colorado in the summer of 1914 over a miners' strike, woman suffrage took centerstage as the scapegoat. An editorial in the *Times-Dispatch* reasoned that the violence in Colorado provided "proof that women, if given the vote, will not bring about the millennium or even make matters appreciably better."³¹ As a direct response to suffrage rhetoric that often claimed that the votes of women would serve to uplift humanity and would appreciably enhance the social and political conditions of the state and the nation, this adage sought to discredit such lofty hopes. One particularly scathing antisuffrage letter announced: "Sons of suffrage mothers shoot and burn and kill—women and children are among the victims

. . .the feminized government proves too weak and inefficient to control the situation and calls on the man-governed nation to take command.”³²

Seeking to squelch the storm being raised against woman suffrage, suffragists did respond to what they often termed the ridiculous arguments of the antis. One such writer failed to see the connection between the violence in Colorado and the withholding of the vote from women, writing “we hear of terrible mob violence where men are unlawfully demanding something they consider their right. Is that a reason why law-abiding citizens should not be given every right and privilege?”³³ Colorado would not be the only problem in need of a positive public relations spin before the end of the summer of 1914 in Richmond.

A moving picture of a baseball game between white women and black men, entitled “Champion Suffragette Baseball Team Defeats New York’s Colored Giants” sparked another image crisis.³⁴ The all-white leaders of the Equal Suffrage League of Virginia foresaw a storm of fury. In one letter, writing to the League’s president, one suffragist announced: “The effect on the public mind is that suffragists in New York are playing games with negro men. It has been told all over Richmond that ‘an Equal Suffrage League of New York City’ played a game against negro men.”³⁵ She continued by drawing attention to the difference in the title of the two different suffrage organizations, “but to the public, there is no difference . . . It does us just as much harm as though the title had been ‘The New York Equal Suffrage League’.”³⁶ Clearly, the ESL did not want the white public’s image of its organization to be one that would associate itself with black men, and the League’s leaders could not have expressed their distress more vividly. This incident highlighted a central fear of

Southern relations that black men and white women would thereafter join together either sexually or otherwise. While there may be no evidence recording their personal remarks on the situation, their concern over Richmond's reaction epitomized their belief that the image of white women and black men associating would create nothing but extremely negative publicity for the suffragists.

Obviously, some were unhappy with the current state of suffrage in Virginia and advocated that additional requirements apply to everyone, such as "tests for all voters, so that in that State at least there shall be an educated citizenship, without which the welfare of no State can be secure."³⁷ One writer summed up the opinion of many by remarking, "Could we just change this unrestricted ballot to an intelligent property-owning one, our dear old State would be much better off."³⁸ By calling for property qualifications, many poor whites and blacks would be further restricted from voting. Undoubtedly, much of this rhetoric directly attacked the black vote and the poor white vote as much it did votes for women, but it serves to illustrate how the lines of gender and race often overlapped in the language of the suffrage movement.

Arguments addressing the relationship between suffrage and race ranged in the white press from blatant racism to implied white supremacy, with little to no discussions promoting a sense of racial equality and unity. In contrast, the black press often dealt with the problem of the extreme limitations placed on black male voters while simultaneously maintaining a universal suffrage ideal. As a further examination of race will show, race and gender, whether explicitly or implicitly, often landed side-by-side in the quest for suffrage in Richmond.

On the practical points of voting eligibility, few white voices of universal suffrage spoke in Richmond during the suffrage debate. Many showed their favor of certain women gaining the vote, but they also sat poised to express why “less desirable” women must be barred from the polls. Unlike the white press, the black press called for unrestricted universal suffrage. An article appearing in the *Richmond Planet* in 1916 suggested not only that women would help promote better living and working conditions at home and in the community but also that “universal suffrage will make the child labor law secure.”³⁹ Encased in a common argument suggesting women would better conditions for themselves and their children, this article by columnist Minnie Scott showed how arguments of universal suffrage were not completely absent, although a racial divide often determined the employment of such arguments since calls for universal suffrage appeared almost exclusively in the black press. While commentators in the white press often suggested property restrictions, which did not exist in Virginia in the early 1900s, arguments in the black press often explicitly stated that tens of thousands of black men had been denied access to the ballot through voting restrictions. They therefore argued for a much more open suffrage to include everyone, knowing that any restrictions placed on the vote would often be specifically tailored to further disfranchise the black vote. While many white pro-suffrage commentators crafted rhetoric that sought to limit the vote by race, most black commentators argued for universal suffrage and saw the battle for woman suffrage as a possible method to reopen the issue of black male suffrage as well which was precisely what whites feared.

A push for suffrage on the state level in Virginia never succeeded. In 1914, E. C. Buck, a member of Virginia's legislature, declared that "the women of our state can have equal suffrage with men when they desire it. In 1912 . . . not a single petition came."⁴⁰ Many legislators expressed similar sentiments in response to the ESL's solicitations for supporting woman suffrage in the General Assembly. The ESL arranged petitions and letters from throughout the state to arrive at the legislators' doorsteps, but they never succeeded in garnering enough support to win the fight. Writing in response to the question of why woman suffrage continually failed in the General Assembly, lawyer Thomas Hunter assessed the root cause as there being "too many gray-beards in it—too many dear old Confederate [veterans], who honestly and gallantly believe, not that woman is not good enough for the ballot but that the ballot is not good enough for women."⁴¹ In an attempt to help suffragists deal with the perceived corruption of women's moral purity that some saw in women's access to the vote, Hunter advised the ESL to court the support of the younger contingent and to be wary of those women who are "wheedled and flattered by the argument made by sentimental old gentlemen."⁴² However, Hunter's advice fell flat since woman suffrage never received endorsement by the General Assembly and, when faced with ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, the Assembly chose not to ratify it.

Fearing woman suffrage would reopen the question of black suffrage that many Southern states had successfully defused through state voting restrictions after the federally-mandated Fifteenth amendment gave black men the vote, Southern congressmen sought to prevent the votes of women and to keep the question of the

black vote submerged. On the national level during the middle part of the 1910s, woman suffrage seemed to meet with no greater success. In response to the failure of a 2/3 majority of the Senate to pass the federal resolution in March 1914, the editorial page of the *Times-Dispatch* declared, “[The South] will stand as the impregnable buttress of conservatism, of the Constitution and laws, and of the real American spirit and purpose.”⁴³ In a previous report on the Senate’s action, it surfaced that “the Southern Senators, all Democrats, lined up almost solidly against the amendment. They contended it would complicate the Negro question in their states.”⁴⁴ Furthermore, Senator Vardaman led an attempt to repeal the Fifteenth amendment to the Constitution. The article reported: “With the negro question removed, he said, he favored the granting of suffrage to women. His proposal was defeated, 49 to 19, and a proposition by Senator Williams to give the ballot to white women only was defeated, 44 to 21.”⁴⁵

The suitability of women for the vote continually arose in the discussions addressing woman suffrage. Constructing a classic argument, antis argued that women’s power in or access to the public sphere would lead to corruption and therefore destabilize a gender system built on women’s supposed moral superiority. Some saw no place for women at the polls, others believed they possessed every right to be there, and still others presented more unique arguments. In 1910, one writer saw no reason for women to vote because it would only serve to corrupt them as it had the male voters. He reasoned, “when the average woman voter is as corrupt as the average man voter, will not the last state of the country be worse than the first?”⁴⁶ Others, however, concluded that given the state of politics, women could do no worse

than men, offering that “some change should be made, if only to let the women try their hands at it.”⁴⁷

Sometimes, characterizations of women portrayed them as incapable of properly voting and thereby painted a dim view of what they might accomplish with an actual vote. When Pittsburgh held a straw poll for women voters in 1910, newspapers reported women voting multiple times, attempting to look at their ballots after casting them, and scratching out candidates’ names in order to insert their personal favorites. The report sarcastically noted that one part of town did not begin voting until the early afternoon hours “so as not to interfere with the sleeping hours of the suffragists,”⁴⁸ a possible attack on some antisuffragists’ depiction of suffragists’ laziness and unproductiveness. If the antisuffragists could portray suffragists as neglecting their “duties,” it would further discredit the suffragists in their drive for the vote.

Some advocated that women should first be allowed to vote “in all matters regarding the welfare of children, such as schools”⁴⁹ as a type of testing ground as to their suitability to vote on other matters, but they also admonished that at no time should “any woman run for the office of sheriff or Governor or Commonwealth’s Attorney.”⁵⁰ These arguments showed that some commentators were willing to grant women a voice through the vote on domestic matters, such as laws regarding children and education, but were hesitant or even vehemently opposed to extending their voting privileges to issues that fell outside of women’s traditional roles within the home.

Other reasons and schemes for denying women the vote popped up frequently in Richmond papers. One writer in 1914 believed that “giving [the vote] to many women who are even less fit to use it than many men”⁵¹ would help nothing and should therefore be discouraged. Another made a completely different suggestion, proposing that “the new French scheme of one vote for each family . . . may solve the problem,” further postulating that it “may even cause the women to be trained in athletics, so she will be on an equal footing when the question arises who shall cast the family vote.”⁵² By making the issue of the vote into a humorous treatise on physical prowess, this writer created the perfect scheme in which women, as part of the family, would in theory be part of the voting decision but in reality would continue to be relegated to a second-place position behind their husbands while also assuming physical strength to be the touchstone determining voting eligibility.

By examining the decade of the 1910s, this study traces the ways in which arguments both for and against women’s presence at the ballot box changed over time as suffragists and antis adjusted their approaches and strategies. While some issues, such as the question of race, maintained their prominence throughout the 1910s, other arguments lost their potency over the years as new issues emerged in the forefront of the debate.

II

PRO AND ANTISUFFRAGE RHETORIC IN RICHMOND

As Virginia entered the twentieth century, state legislators decided to further restrict the pool of eligible voters by erecting more barriers in the path of potential ballot-casters. Under Virginia's Constitution of 1851, all white male citizens gained the right to vote, provided they were at least twenty-one years of age, had lived in Virginia for two years, and had lived in the same county or town for a year. With the rewriting of the Constitution in 1902, the General Assembly disfranchised many poor whites and black men as a result of a combination of new requirements, including a poll tax and a grandfather clause. Historian Sara Graham notes that, due to the determinacy of the race issue, the 1902 'race solution' equally became a 'gender solution.'⁵³ These restrictions curbed the black vote as well as the poor white vote, and advocates for woman suffrage would have to surmount these same restrictions to gain the vote. From the start of serious activism for women's suffrage, these restrictions predetermined that the pool of eligible votes, if woman suffrage passed, would necessarily be elite.

Spurred by the renewal of suffrage activity on the national level, the Equal Suffrage League of Virginia formed in 1909 to bolster support for woman suffrage, and it enrolled 120 members during its first year. By 1916, its numbers swelled to ten thousand and by the end of the decade, it boasted 30,000 members, a number it proclaimed roughly equaled the tally of votes cast for the past governor of Virginia in the primary elections. Although the ESL of Virginia issued over six thousand press releases per year, the print media largely ignored the group.⁵⁴

Formed in 1912 to combat woman suffrage, the Virginia Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, according to suffrage historian Sara Graham, “skillfully called forth an image of womanhood that was uniquely apolitical—and distinctly southern.”⁵⁵ Their flyers charged that woman suffrage would initiate “negro rule” in at least twenty-nine counties in Virginia. Black voters and the threat they were perceived to pose to white supremacy emerged as a central tenet and concern of both the suffragists and the antis.

Though members of the General Assembly introduced equal suffrage amendments in 1912, 1914, and 1916, and suffrage gained more support over the years, no woman suffrage amendment ever passed the assembly.⁵⁶ Editorials in the *Times-Dispatch* often promoted the antisuffrage cause. In 1916, the editor observed, “Virginia doesn’t want woman suffrage, for reasons that to the *Times-Dispatch* appear quite sufficient. Women certainly are not oppressed in this Commonwealth. Some disabilities they do labor under, but for the most part the law makes them the object of its special protection.” The editorial reasoned that not only did Virginia protect its women, but it also held that “rather close observation of suffrage States convinces us that they enjoy no happiness and make no progress that cannot be matched or surpassed in other States where the voting privilege is confined to the mere man.”⁵⁷ Clearly, the editor measured the question of woman suffrage on whether women’s votes would improve the current condition of the state. He concluded that since the state would not be sufficiently improved by woman suffrage, then it should not be granted.

In 1919, when President Wilson urged Virginia to ratify the woman suffrage amendment, the *Times-Dispatch* vehemently lambasted him, branding such action as “interference with Virginia’s domestic affairs” which “comes dangerously near being pernicious political activity. There is little doubt that the Honorable General Assembly of . . . Virginia will so regard it, and properly resent it.”⁵⁸ Others urged the question of woman suffrage to be forestalled until January because “the Virginia General Assembly has big constructive work to do” and should not be sidetracked by the frivolity of woman suffrage since “by no wild stretch of the most elastic imagination can ratification of the suffrage amendment be deemed an emergency.”⁵⁹ By striving to delay the question of woman suffrage, the legislators continuously sought to sweep it under the rug and thereby deem it unimportant and hope the issue might not resurface if they ignored it for a sufficient amount of time.

In 1919, the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage announced it would set out to defeat the Nineteenth amendment and asked its supporters “just why you want to put back the clock sixty years and restore all the race hatred, carpetbag rule, and negro domination that existed in the Southland from 1866 to 1880 . . .”⁶⁰ Here, the antisuffragists invoked the history of reconstruction to discredit woman suffrage. According to them, the federal government swept down upon the South after the Civil War and began imposing unwanted laws and regulations, and it now attempted to do the same with woman suffrage. When the amendment reached Tennessee and it passed the legislature, thereby enacting the Nineteenth amendment to the Constitution, the *Times-Dispatch* berated the state, claiming that “Tennessee has broken the faith and has put the greatest blot upon the South that could have

been.”⁶¹ While the federal amendment was defeated in Virginia, it nevertheless took effect in 1920, although Virginia did not officially ratify it until 1952. Despite this belated gesture, the first women elected to the General Assembly of Virginia took their seats in 1923.⁶²

Antisuffragists protested against the vote throughout the suffrage campaign. One antisuffragist worried about women “being creatures of temperamental infirmity by reason of being swayed by emotion rather than reason” causing confusion and actually provoking war in the resulting chaos. The writer questioned: “Would Virginia best not inaugurate a movement to abolish needless restrictions which disfranchise three-fourths of its potential male voters, rather than lend support to this craze of extending the ballot to women?”⁶³ According to this assessment, white men, even those who were poor and illiterate, deserved the vote based on their sex more than elite white women did, an argument many of the well-to-do members of the ESL would have vehemently opposed.

Remarking on his fear of gender inversion, A. Carlton Parker reasoned that “men are fast losing their real mental vivacity and individuality, and women are fast becoming more course and garrulous, and our real natures are becoming neutralized.”⁶⁴ While suffragists embraced the philosophy of differing natures between women and men as a reason why women’s voice should be heard in politics, the idea that women might assume men’s nature if they began to participate in politics still threatened the fight for the franchise. Both suffragists and antis discussed the same gender system in terms of extolling women’s purity. The antis argued that the vote destroyed moral purity and therefore corrupted and destabilized all of society

whereas suffragists suggested that in order to bring morality to the public sphere, they must have the vote.

Home and motherhood held a significant place in the suffrage debates. Both suffragists and antisuffragists praised women's work in the home and as mothers, but they used this praise for opposite ends. E. L. Robinson, arguing for woman suffrage, reasoned that "the State is safeguarding and preserving the health and morals of the young but is doing a mother's work. We need the blending of the mother heart and the masculine judgment and will to sustain and guard our homes."⁶⁵ Suffragists frequently pointed to women's work as mothers as the prime example of the positive influence women's vote could have on society. While some certainly argued that women deserved the franchise as a right regardless of any 'uplifting' effect it might or might not have, several urged that women must be given the vote to protect the home. One writer concluded in 1915 that the antisuffragists could never successfully counter the argument for suffrage, suggesting the "manifest need of the unfettered female conscience in our social life."⁶⁶ Some, however, saw suffragists and other women stepping into the public life as endangering the very institution the suffragists often stressed they sought to protect—the family.

Since the family was seen as women's supreme area of work and control, arguments over how well women functioned within their families received much attention. In 1915, a Richmond writer pointed to a study which declared that collegiate training led to feminism and celibacy, charging that "education and the things which go with it have made 'spinster voter-esses' of the women graduates."⁶⁷ Another writer noted that "the extremely modern arm of the suffrage feminists is

quite busy forming birth control organizations for the spread of information which must tend to decreased births” but satisfactorily concluded that “non-woman suffrage Virginia shows a much more normal condition of family life.”⁶⁸ By arguing that woman suffrage would actually destroy what it often proclaimed it would save—home and family—the issue of women’s involvement in the movement became a question of their place within and outside of the home.

In a 1919 editorial, J. H. Crosier wrote that woman suffrage “pertains to the very foundation of civilization. It pertains to the sanctity of homes. It pertains to the sacredness of the family. The State is nothing more than an aggregation of families.”⁶⁹ He continued by exalting the nobility of mothers during the war “who instead of going up and down the country agitating the question of woman suffrage were at home instilling into the minds of the boys paramount lessons, lessons of patriotism.” Given the supreme task of morally educating their sons who must grow into loyal citizens, Crosier doubted that women “during the best part of their lives while child-bearing [should] give the requisite consideration to serious governmental problems to enable them to vote intelligently.”⁷⁰ Such arguments characterized good women as those who devoted their lives to the home and bad women as those who left their homes and families to politically agitate for the vote to the detriment of the entire nation. Others also shared this understanding expressed by R. M. Williams in a letter to the editor describing the home as the “bulwark of the nation.”⁷¹ Accordingly, suffragists who crossed the threshold of the home and entered the public became “fools who rush in where angels fear to tread.”⁷²

The question of the “home” and woman’s place in and out of it fueled commentary for both the suffragists and the antis. In the early 1910s, a newspaper reader wondered how “any sane man or any newspaper with an intelligent editor should notice such an insignificant matter as the woman suffrage movement. It has come to a disgusting state of affairs when women want to run the country.”⁷³ In the *Times-Dispatch*’s response, the editorial recognized the significance of the woman suffrage movement, but remained noncommittal on the suffrage question, although it did offer that “of course, woman’s realm is in the home. Everybody agrees to that . . .”⁷⁴ Others also responded to the accusation that the vote would take women out of the home and turn them into political machines. As early as 1909, a *Times-Dispatch* reader refuted the idea that the ballot would turn women into political tyrants when it had not had that effect on men, stating that surely the ballot would have no “immediate, revolutionary, and utterly explosive effect upon the nature and being of woman.”⁷⁵ Yet the antis remained firm in their belief: “Women in politics would give the final stroke in the demolition of the home.”⁷⁶

Both suffragists and antis glorified women in the home, but they reached opposing conclusions as to the effect of the ballot on this position. One popular argument of the suffragists extolled maternalism as the reason women needed the vote. As one suffragist wrote, “the ballot is an aid in her business of child-culture, which is the first and greatest business of the world.”⁷⁷ Furthermore, those supporting the franchise for women also argued that the ballot would serve as a way to influence school and government law, particularly those concerning children.

The antis stood poised with a response in hand. “A mother,” wrote one, “hears more wonderful things from the lips of her children than she does in any public conveyance. And she owns in maternity an inalienable glory that affairs and politics can scarcely offer.”⁷⁸ By painting such a rosy view of the home, the antis sought to discredit any possibility that women needed to venture outside of it for any reason, much less to vote, and by praising children as the pinnacle of achievement, responses to such rhetoric were difficult to construct.

That the home was woman’s chief concern was clearly articulated in other pieces appearing almost daily in the newspapers. When the *Times-Dispatch* began its “Woman’s Page” in 1912, beauty, cooking, and childcare tips filled its columns as well as its accompanying advertisements. One commentator stated: “The woman who cannot cook is greatly handicapped in her race for the final goal—married happiness.”⁷⁹ Another opponent to woman suffrage reasoned how “true nobility of woman is to keep her own sphere and to adorn it, not like the comet, daunting and perplexing other systems but as the pure star, which is the first to light the day and last to leave it.”⁸⁰ Such commentators promoted the idea that women’s place remained in the home, and they should not leave it to vote.

Some moved away from typifying the duties of each sex to question the existence of separate standards while simultaneously calling for what one writer termed the “enhanced morality of manhood.”⁸¹ Commenting on the “lower social value the world has placed upon the morality of manhood,” this writer lamented that “civil law bars the door of the gilded saloon to woman to protect her, and opens it wide to wreck manhood.”⁸² This writer advocated a single moral standard for both

men and women and showed how this also functioned as a facet of the suffrage debates. While some chose this method to advocate for a more moral manhood (as opposed to advocating swinging the saloon doors wide for women, too), other women duly noted that they “do not care to be on equality with men, but prefer to remain their acknowledged superiors”⁸³ and to remain, by extension, without the ballot.

As the antisuffragists argued against woman suffrage as women’s unfounded usurpation of traditionally male rights and responsibilities, arguments concerning wage labor for women confronted the same problems. Women left their homes for other reasons than to campaign for the vote, and their numbers only increased with the coming of World War I. In 1912, a Richmond writer addressing what he or she believed to be the suffragists’ argument against wage discrimination in the favor of men concluded: “In view of the fact that the responsibility devolves upon the man of supporting one wife and rearing and educating from one to a dozen children, it is but right that the means should justify the end.”⁸⁴ Arguing under the assumption that all working women were single and childless and all working men were husbands and fathers, the point was made that men, as the family’s breadwinners, must be compensated accordingly. The legislature proved to be no more sympathetic to women’s concerns, and it also acted to uphold the family wage ideology which supported men earning enough money to support “his” family.

While others also expressed the view that assumed all working women were single and childless, the question of women and wage labor took on a new significance during the war. In 1918, Maximilian Grossman admitted in the *Times-Dispatch* that although he remained an “ardent advocate of women’s rights,” he was

increasingly alarmed at “the vast extent to which women’s competition with men has been developed.”⁸⁵ In Grossman’s eyes, not only did women lower the wage scale so that “the economic competition of the sexes has handicapped in a measure the economic efficiency of the male wage-earner and supporter of families,” but work outside the home also exposed them to “indiscriminate and chance male companionship.”⁸⁶ Like antisuffragists who pointed to the degeneration of the homes left by marauding suffragists, Grossman blamed women’s wage labor for ruining the family and deserting the children as women entered “masculine occupations, blunting and stunting their feminine characteristics and influence.”⁸⁷ According to Grossman, working women would be responsible for nothing short of the “loss of homelife” and the corruption of a generation.

Both suffragists and antisuffragists invoked a moral discourse to support their relative positions. In a letter “pigeonholed” by the editors of the *Times-Dispatch*, to use the language of its writer, William Torrence⁸⁸ attacked the antis, insisting that they “tell us if ‘woman’s sphere’—which is the term everlasting blown in our ears—is only the home . . . why woman’s Creator has not seen to it that every woman is given the conditions necessary to staying in her sphere and why any woman has to go out to work.” He ended his tirade by hailing the suffrage movement as “a part of the religious forward movement” and “the extension of the Christian spirit.”⁸⁹ According to Torrence, women must be given the vote because some women had no choice but to work out of economic necessity, and they should therefore be endowed with the means to protect their labor interests politically.

Others argued, as this writer did, that women's divinely ordained place "was not to be the inferior of man nor his superior, but his equal."⁹⁰ Some suffragists thwarted the patriarchy of the Old Testament with the New Testament teachings of Paul, and, when Paul silenced women, they then looked to Christ, reasoning that, "as Christ towered above Paul in sublimity of character, so He towered above him in His perception of the dignity and worth of humanity—men and women together."⁹¹

David Ramsay, pastor of Grace Street Baptist church in Richmond, made an interesting argument about woman suffrage on December 19, 1909. He began his sermon by claiming success for the woman suffrage movement unless men stepped in to "right the age-long evils of the present day."⁹² While citing it as men's place to correct these ills, he noted that women stepped into the saloon and temperance movements and that "some men have more faith in women than in God." Reported under the headline, "Women Will Win Suffrage Battle," Ramsay presented an argument which claimed that man's place was to go into the world and to deal with its problems, but he also reasoned that if men did not rise to the occasion (and, in his assessment, they neither were at present nor acting as if they would), women would assume those roles, and woman suffrage would be a reality, noting that "women can fight with other weapons than fingernails."⁹³ This argument crafted a position that, while not overtly pro-suffrage, recognized the potential political power of women and their ability to successfully wield it.

Of course, staunch defenders could likewise be found using religious imagery to deny women the ballot and to argue for their placement 'beneath' men. In a 1910 sermon, one preacher reasoned, "Our Creator did not choose to make Eve from the

head of man, lest she should set herself on a perilous level with him . . . not from his hands, for the work of the world was to be done by the man in the main.” According to this view, women were helpmeets, second in creation and second to men. Women were to be mothers, companions, ornaments, and “the unspeakable reward of all [her husband’s] labors.”⁹⁴ Others, like Frances Baylor, plainly delineated the gender hierarchy, purporting, “First the Divine law and order, that of able and good men; then in next place, that of good women. Anything else stands the pyramid on its apex and cannot but prove a disastrous failure.”⁹⁵ By evoking religion, these suffrage opponents sought to perpetuate a hierarchy that placed God above all and men above women.

Antisuffragists often portrayed suffragists as acting against God or chastised them for wasting their time on suffrage campaigns which, had it instead been “devoted to the spread of the Gospel, it would have hastened the millennium.”⁹⁶ Rev. Graham Lambeth of Richmond called the work of the “suffragettes” in Richmond a “great evil.” He pointed to young women promenading on Broad Street “sometimes disgustingly garbed, the faces of many ‘made up.’”⁹⁷ In response to this perceived wild behavior on the part of the young, he concluded that if the proponents of woman suffrage cannot “sweep the mat at their front door, how can the public believe them able or willing to reform and purify the world.”⁹⁸ By invoking the term “suffragette,” Lambeth conjured up a specific image in the mind of the public. Suffragettes participated in the English suffrage movement, and Richmond newspapers frequently reported on and denounced their “militant” tactics. By drawing parallels between “militant suffragettes” from which the ESL repeatedly sought to distance themselves,

and by commenting on suffragists promenading on the streets like prostitutes, Lambeth sought to portray suffragists in a light completely appalling to the public. Writing in 1918, C.M.D. called suffragists “pushing into politics, forgetting or treating with open scorn the lovely examples and admirable instructions given in Scripture . . . a sorrowful premonition of that great falling away from the Christian faith.”⁹⁹ One contributor noted that women’s push for the franchise must be thwarted by “the manliness, courage, firmness, and justice of our State representatives and their loyalty to the Christian religion, to home, to the marriage laws and all that we hold sacred.”¹⁰⁰ According to these commentators, suffragists not only ignored their greater duty to God, but they also became the worst types of women, such as the “street women” portrayed by Graham Lambeth.

In August 1919, a correspondent wrote a letter quoting a Richmond bishop, Rev. Warren Cander, calling woman suffrage “unscriptural, injurious to women, hurtful to men, damaging to children . . . At best, it is an unnecessary and dangerous experiment and in the South, it is especially undesirable in view of the race question which it would surely complicate further.”¹⁰¹ Another writer, citing the Biblical creation story, remarked that “God took one of his ribs and made Eve. Why, of course, a man’s rib should never vote . . .”¹⁰² Most summarized their arguments by detailing how suffragists remained “opposed to the teaching of the Bible and subversive of the highest interests of our men, our women, and our children.”¹⁰³ These commentators saw suffragists as defying the proper gender norms and instead engaging in inappropriate behavior that would negatively affect the morality of the nation.

Suffragists, of course, also invoked moral discourses to combat the arguments of the antisuffragists, although most letters in the *Times-Dispatch* addressing religion and the vote tended to look unfavorably upon the enfranchisement of women. In May 1919, a blurb from St. Louis noted the recommendation in the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church that women receive full equality in church affairs, including the right to be ministers and elders.¹⁰⁴ Also, the Quakers consistently stood as a religious group who had made universal suffrage the standard in both their communities and churches for over two hundred years. One writer used this practice to combat the argument that equal suffrage “will tend to make women less gentle and feminine” by highlighting Quaker women’s “gentle domesticity, their shrinking femininity, their quiet modesty.”¹⁰⁵ As with many rationales both for and against the vote, the question of women’s “nature” and the possible threat of their corrupting that nature remained at the center of many arguments.

When addressing religion, no issue caused more consternation and fiery debate than Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s *Woman’s Bible*. One commentator pointed to a quote from the *Woman’s Bible* which stated: “what we should do is to say to outsiders that a Christian has neither more nor less right in our association than an atheist. When our platform becomes too narrow for people of all creeds and no creeds, I myself shall not stand upon it.”¹⁰⁶ The writer then argued that the 65th Congress’s defeat of the Nineteenth amendment “has outlined our position as a Christian people.”¹⁰⁷ Others wrote that Stanton and her compatriots “representing the founders of woman suffrage in this country . . . deny the divinity of Christ.”¹⁰⁸ To discredit the movement’s founding leaders as religiously blasphemous was an attempt

to discredit the movement as a whole. Others, however, leapt to the defense of both, with one writer attempting to explain her belief that Stanton's dissatisfaction lay not with the Bible but with human commentators whose words proved detrimental to women.¹⁰⁹

Thomas Jefferson's Bible and its morality became intertwined in the debate before it finished, and Lila Valentine, the president of the ESL of Virginia, also added her perspective in an attempt to allay public fears over the *Woman's Bible* controversy. In her letter published in the May 14, 1919 issue of the *Times-Dispatch*, she wrote that some people were "apparently obsessed with the idea that all members of the suffrage association endorse and accept this book as a substitute for the Bible." She went on to ask: "Are we to infer . . . that every antisuffragist is required to accept the King James version of the Holy Bible as their standard of religious beliefs before being admitted to the anti association?" Valentine concluded her response by noting first that the NAWSA did not publish the *Woman's Bible*, and "until our attention was called to the book by your correspondents among the antis, the ESL was unaware of its existence. We do not possess a copy because we do not deal with religious controversial questions and therefore have no use for it."¹¹⁰ Attempting to steer the conversation away from religion, Valentine hoped to disconnect the ESL and woman suffrage from any particular religious association which could limit its appeal, but the question of religion would not dissipate until the ratification and implementation of the 19th Amendment.

Constructions of "home," "woman's place," and "marriage" became tied to a conventional Christianity. Some writers portrayed suffragists as divorcees parading

around in public in blatant violation of sacred religious beliefs. A letter from 1919 criticized the first suffrage convention for wrongly and violently attacking “man’s monopoly of the pulpit,” Lucy Stone for never using her husband’s name, and some women for wearing bloomers with the “desire to wear men’s clothes becoming so acute among them that for a time politics were almost forgotten.” It concluded by referring to the convention as Susan B. Anthony’s “Easy Divorce Convention” where “rebellion against the laws of God, of man and of nature” reigned.¹¹¹ Others characterized the entire history of woman suffrage as symbolized by unseemly leaders such as Frances Wright, “a Scotch atheist and Socialist” who denounced marriage and edited a “communist journal,” and Ernestine Rose, “a Polish atheist, banished from Austria.”¹¹² By creating a fear that suffrage would fuel women’s rebellion against their traditional gender roles, antisuffragists hoped to prod people into reasserting control over such “deviant” behavior and crush the woman suffrage movement.

The world’s entry into World War I, particularly the entrance of the United States into the fight in 1917, had significant effects on women’s struggle for the vote. Not only did war coverage overshadow and often stop what had previously been a frequent topic of suffrage debate in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, but the war and the issues of democracy it raised shaped yet another round of suffrage debates. According to a 1917 *Times-Dispatch* editorial addressing the recent picketing of the White House (or “fool mischief,” as one writer preferred) by a suffrage organization, women wanted “to start a war of [their] own while the country is preparing to enter the war for its very existence as a free people.”¹¹³ Women could thwart the war effort

and “would aid the enemies of their country for a German victory that they may snatch at the shadow of freedom for women.”¹¹⁴ Clearly, the *Times-Dispatch*’s editor and a significant portion of its readership saw women as a threat that they could portray as damaging to the war effort on a national level and as endangering U.S. soldiers sent to fight the enemy on a personal level.

Many used the United States’ entrance into war as a way to undermine the woman suffrage movement by calling for its suppression during wartime. In a letter to the editor, one writer quoted Senator Baird of New Jersey as setting the path to follow by proclaiming it would be “better to leave the settlement of this extraneous question to calm and clear minds when the war is over.”¹¹⁵ Another commentator added that this “untimely and unnecessary agitation” would not only be a great danger to the South but “in every great state of the North, it would be the cause of schism where there should be union of thought, purpose, and effort in the business of conquering Germany.”¹¹⁶ By heightening the fear that woman suffrage would rip apart a supposedly unified nation at a time when absolute unity should override all else and, in the words of Senator Shields of Tennessee, “divert the minds and energies of the people from the one great absorbing subject before us,”¹¹⁷ these voices sought to bury the question of woman suffrage in the trenches of the war. As late as 1919, the *Times-Dispatch* quoted the *London Review* as citing how woman suffrage in Britain had been “huddled through in the agony and confusion of the great war,”¹¹⁸ which the *Times-Dispatch* reported as paralleling a similar attempt in America. Others complained that the debate surrounding woman suffrage interfered with “the homecoming of our blessed boys.”¹¹⁹ This wartime rhetoric sought to suppress

women's agitation for the vote by pointing to the higher cause of the war while ironically ignoring the link between discourses promoting democracy abroad and woman suffrage at home.

Many citizens expected women to make worthwhile contributions to the war effort in various ways, both inside and outside of the home. In 1917, Fannie Hurst reported in the *Times-Dispatch* that housewives "have it in their power to make the housewife's apron a uniform of national significance"¹²⁰ by conserving food and clothing. However, "all honor is due to the women who leave their homes to nurse and care for the wounded."¹²¹ As some writers urged women to leave the home in order to take their distinctly feminine nurturing skills to the battlefield, others, such as Frederic Harkin, called all women committed to the war to not only aid the Red Cross but to train themselves to take care of men and to support themselves. He spoke of European women filling men's places and the worry of some that they would not go quietly home after the war and that while the agitation for the ballot in the United States remained "conspicuously manifest," it had rightly and significantly evaporated due to the focus on the war effort. Although he delineated women's work in the peace party as an unwelcome exception, he concluded: "The great meaning of preparedness, then, for women is to make every woman self-supporting. War has no place for the parasite."¹²² While some urged women into the factories and beyond, another editorial condescendingly noted how "Afro-American women . . . want to take the places that belong to the men, leaving the places that belong to women vacant . . . because the times are out of joint for a surety when world-wide war in the home and the factory and the office and on the fields of carnage tends to destroy all

the distinctions between the sexes.”¹²³ Race became a significant factor in the gendered atmosphere of wartime labor.

While women’s place in the home and in the factory sparked much debate, women’s absence from the battlefield also generated heat in the debates over suffrage. Repeatedly throughout the years, women’s proscription from battle had been advanced as a key reason why they neither needed nor deserved the “privilege” of the ballot. One writer suggested that “the next time some nondefender is heard to advance the ‘blank cartridge ballot’ stuff, a gun should be put in hand and he should be led gently to the recruiting office. It would be, ‘Enlist my suffrage instructor, or else establish your own military record.’”¹²⁴ Of course, women’s vocal participation in peace movements of the time only further fueled the mounting flames rising in opposition to suffragists.

Some suffragists countered the very idea that women should be held to a standard that had never been applied to men. Viola Kaufman acknowledged such discrepancies by extolling how “one-legged and one-armed men, men so infirm, they are carried to the polls in conveyances, blind men and deaf men are all permitted to vote, while women are told they shall not vote because they cannot fight.”¹²⁵

Through such statements, suffragists sought to strike down antis’ arguments that they believed did not, in practice, apply to men and should also not apply to women.

Some suffragists also advanced the concept of “blank cartridge ballots,” claiming that “women’s ballots would not be founded on brute force”¹²⁶ and would therefore be a welcome addition to the electorate. According to this view, military service would

remain an issue, but it would be an issue used to determine how people voted whether than a determinant in deciding who received the vote.

The war not only intensified the debate surrounding how or if the vote should be connected to the ability to serve in the military, but its much-discussed rhetoric of democracy and its frequent condemnation of socialism also flowed into the question of woman suffrage. When the *Times-Dispatch* questioned and doubted the right of women to wield membership in the proposed League of Nations, Helen Love-Bossieux, who described herself as both a suffragist and a war worker, wrote to express her vexation at the suggestion that it is “we the women of the South, who are looked upon as not being capable or prepared to handle the franchise”¹²⁷ and to argue for women’s inclusion. In an editorial denoting the history of popular government, which outlined a timeline of democracy yet made no mention of women, Lucy Randolph Mason wrote to note the relevance of woman suffrage to the topic and to promote its passage as a step toward furthering democracy.¹²⁸ Suffragists repeatedly connected the rhetoric of the war promoting democracy to the world to their struggle to be integrated into America’s much-lauded “democracy.”

Others, however, made a tight, and for the suffrage cause a potentially devastating, connection between socialism and woman suffrage. Not only did suffragists face red-baiting, but in early 1919, the *Times-Dispatch* carried an editorial blurb quoting a prominent New York attorney assessing how “‘uplift’ society women are easy prey to Bolshevist propaganda.” The newspaper further reported: “The Bolshevist program, he said, included them and their fad movements as fallow ground in which to sow the seeds of Bolshevism. There is more truth than poetry in this

statement.”¹²⁹ Other reports only added to such fears. In 1919, an editorial letter proclaimed that “every Socialist country on earth is a women’s suffrage country.” It further asserted that “the world’s most conspicuous example of women’s suffrage is Russia, in that distressed Bolshevist country twenty-six million women can vote. In no civilized country is the condition of women worse upset politically, socially, and economically.”¹³⁰ If the antis could paint the suffragists red, they could successfully discredit them in the eyes of many potential supporters. Despite the connection drawn between socialism and suffrage, the idea of democracy and the rhetoric it entailed as a system of governing still appeared to some as blatantly contradictory to fight a war for the proposed protection of democracy abroad and then limit democracy at home. In late 1919, E. R. Cook argued in his letter: “With the record of a world war fought and won for democracy, the intelligent men and women of America are unwilling longer to live under a government of, for, and by half the people only.”¹³¹

World War I saw the entrance of women into the work force to fill the labor shortages as men were shipped overseas to fight. However, when the soldiers came home after the war, the question of what to do with wage laboring women now that the boys were back in town loomed large. A letter written to the *Times-Dispatch* in 1919 stressed that women had filled a devastating void out of patriotism and therefore “with the need for production to feed, clothe, and shelter other nations besides our own . . . it is inconceivable than any agency of the Federal government should urge upon them . . . that they withdraw entirely from gainful employment.”¹³² Now that women had become wage workers in larger numbers than ever before, the franchise

began to be seen by some as a necessary protection that women needed, especially because of their increasing numbers in industry. Women, some suffragists argued, needed the vote not only to abolish child labor, which had long been an argument for how women could improve society through the vote, but so they could also protect themselves as industrial workers.

Even when formal participation in politics via the vote remained elusive, women in the labor force could and did effectively use the strike as a political tool.¹³³ In 1917, African-American women went on strike against the American Cigar Company's local stemmery in Norfolk to demand better working conditions and better pay. While women would gain the vote within three years of this strike, some, if not all of these strikers, would have still been denied the vote due to their race until the 1960s.

Perhaps the argument for woman suffrage most readily accepted by those already wielding the vote concerned the position of women who faced sizable tax bills. In 1910, some Chicago women refused to pay their taxes, because they were "excluded from all responsibility for the government . . . being in fact denied all rights in the matter."¹³⁴ By applying economics to the vote, these women hoped to hit the pocketbooks of government to stress unfair treatment. Several Richmonders upheld women paying taxes as the prime example of why women should have the vote, or at least why these particular women should be able to cast a ballot. Some even carried the prospect further during the debate over a larger tax reform issue, arguing that tax reform would provide enough money to finance women's colleges and to pay women decent wages. One wrote, "Tax reform and equal suffrage for

women will go far towards giving the people that economic liberty that is so surely needed for further progress along the lines of social justice.”¹³⁵ Suffragists argued that paying taxes should warrant a vote because “women in Virginia are constitutionally taxed, deprived of, and damaged in their property for public uses, without their own consent, and they have not representatives in the general meaning of that term, for they are even denied the right to confer representative power on any legislator.”¹³⁶ Heralding back to a Revolutionary argument of taxation without representation, one writer concluded: “Taxation without power to apply taxes is undoubtedly tyranny, and ‘representation’ without their won consent is felt by many women in Virginia to be an impious infringement.”¹³⁷ Mrs. George Richardson, critiquing the governor’s speech to the General Assembly in which he exhorted the public to believe the system of taxation was fair, wondered why he did not say men since women “have no voice in the laws and tax system of the state.”¹³⁸

The antis responded by contending that women did not want the vote. As quoted in an editorial, a prominent judge stated that “taxation without representation brought about the Revolutionary War. That is so, but the majority of those who were taxed wanted representation.”¹³⁹ He concluded his comments by asserting that most tax-paying women wanted no such representation. He developed his entire argument in the frequently-used method of compliment, praising the goodness and the necessity of women, but not their necessity at the polls. While women’s influence created a sought-after home life, he and others did not think women should cross over the threshold of their homes, and he used flattery in an attempt to disguise his biting argument for women’s confinement to the home. Refuting the idea that paying taxes

gave women the right to vote, Nellie Parker Henson retorted, “It is not a right— simply a privilege. Paying taxes entitles one only to police and city protection.”¹⁴⁰ By constructing the franchise as a privilege awarded to the deserving few rather than as a right for all to have, Henson and others hoped to ensure that money would not buy women a vote.

Working women also pushed for the vote in letters to the editors of the Richmond papers. In Linda Lumsden’s study, she notes that over five million women worked outside of the home in the United States by the turn of the century.¹⁴¹ In a 1911 letter, one woman constructed a blatant class-based argument, declaring that those who are financially able to stay at home received “masculine care” and may, therefore, not need the vote, but those affected by the social and economic conditions created by the legislature needed the vote without question.¹⁴² This writer, in effect, rejected the normative gender ideology and its lofty promises of patriarchal protection and economic support to women who abided by it. She suggested that most women could not and did not live by such prescriptions and therefore did not have access to the system and its supposed rewards and privileges.

Others believed the vote might help equalize the disparity between the wage differences of men and women, a view that some ardently protested. Yet again, the comparison to suffrage states began, with one writer admonishing, “The right to vote has never yet brought women increase of wages. See Colorado.”¹⁴³ Others reasoned that “if women ever get equal pay with men in the same employ, then men will be put in place of women for never in ‘the long run’ can women do as much work as men.”¹⁴⁴ The fear of women competing with men in the job market and threatening

the pay scale of men spurred these writers to argue for the maintenance of wage disparities between women's and men's work.

The ESL, as well as both the suffragists and the antisuffragists more generally, actively sought to publicly declare their message to as many people as possible. While this publicity often included letters to the editor of local newspapers, they also relied on other public displays as well as the media coverage that often accompanied these events. A newspaper's portrayal or wording of such events could shape the tone of publicity generated and thereby influence the reading audience accordingly. For example, in 1916, the *Times-Dispatch* ran two front page articles, with one devoted to the activities of the suffragists and the other focusing on the antisuffragists. Juxtaposed side-by-side, one headline read "Women Demand Right to Vote" while the other declared an "Eloquent Plea Against Suffrage."¹⁴⁵ While the *Times-Dispatch* portrayed the suffragists as forcefully demanding the vote, the antisuffragists employed rhetorical charm by submissively begging for no franchise. Therefore, while the importance of their activities did have an influence, the tone by which the media portrayed those activities proved to be of equal importance.

In 1915, a woman suffrage convention asked Virginia's Senators Martin and Swanson to aid their cause, and while remaining noncommittal, when asked to join in the accompanying parade, they did.¹⁴⁶ Later in the year, an 18,000 foot petition bearing half a million signatures made its way across the country to mark the opening of the first national convention of the Congressional Union for woman suffrage.¹⁴⁷ On December 9, 1915, the first suffrage convention ever held in Richmond commenced with sessions at the Jefferson Hotel. Delegations visited the governor

asking for his endorsement of the woman suffrage amendment to be introduced in the General Assembly after two hundred people marched down Franklin Street with Lila Valentine leading the column, holding a yellow "Votes for Women" sign. The first speaker, Mrs. John H. Lewis, declared: "We are half of the people. We are interested in the Constitution; we pay taxes, teach, work and strive to be good citizens; 100,000 of us in this State are laboring women, 9,000 are teachers, 350,000 are of voting age."¹⁴⁸ Ellen Robinson from Hampton announced that the peninsula had 575 suffrage league members and over seventeen hundred signers of the suffrage petition. The Governor, however, remained noncommittal, commenting only that the delegation was "the most numerous and by far the most attractive delegation that has waited on me since I have been Governor."¹⁴⁹ By remarking on their appearance, he trivialized, and dismissed, their political demand.

Like the suffragists, the antis actively advocated for their cause, yet they did point out tactical differences which threatened to impede their progress. In early 1916, suffragist Mrs. J.H. Whitner argued with state Senator Andrews "for three-quarters of an hour, but he would only admit that he was not prepared to say whether he would vote for the submission of the amendment. He showed me the circular letter of the Antis."¹⁵⁰ One letter writer called antisuffragists "the large silent majority" and noted that since "the Anti-Suffrage League does not make street corner speeches, we are more dependent on the courtesy of the newspapers than our opponents are."¹⁵¹ However, antisuffragists did appear in the Virginia General Assembly to voice their concern, and Mrs. Fred Jones reminded the Assembly that "Christ chose not one woman to carry the Gospel to the uttermost parts of the

earth.”¹⁵² Reporting on the antisuffrage meeting held at The Jefferson Hotel in early 1916, the *Times-Dispatch* reported on Mrs. Lucy Jean Price who spoke to an immense crowd and did not base her “argument against woman suffrage solely upon the need to keep the pot boiling and the cradle rocking. Rather, she is of the school which believes that nature has appointed women for the performance of certain things men cannot do.” Further detailing the account, the reporter wrote, “It should be mentioned . . . that Miss Price is petite and pretty, and that she was unconscious of her personal charm . . . a brunette beauty.”¹⁵³ Using this quote, the *Times-Dispatch* chose to highlight the feminine beauty of the antisuffragist who fit their mold of proper womanhood. While antisuffragists structured an argument in which they reasoned that they could not effectively combat the suffragists because of their reluctance to “go public” since this constituted a portion of their opposition to suffrage, their actions questioned this reluctance since they did publicly campaign against woman suffrage.

The public image and the need to persuade legislators at both the state and national levels remained top priorities for the ESL throughout their campaign. In a letter written to the League’s District Chair on January 4, 1917, Elizabeth Lewis revealed that “Southern Congressmen are saying that Southern women do not make any demand for the Federal Amendment: please instantly refute this by writing (or telegraphing) John E. Baker, Chairman of Woman Suffrage Committee, House of Representatives.”¹⁵⁴ Equally important was how the League handled the behavior and tactics of other suffragists. When Alice Paul and the National Woman’s Party picketed the White House in 1917, Lila Valentine quickly announced: “The ESL of

Virginia condemns the folly of the fanatical women who are picketing the White House,” referring to the incident as the “impatience and fanaticism of an isolated group of suffragists.”¹⁵⁵ When suffragists again picketed the White House the following year, the *Times-Dispatch* editorialized that “in times of peace, they might be overlooked; in times of war, when the nation’s fate is hanging in the balance, the jails should be enlarged if necessary for their accommodation.”¹⁵⁶ The *Times-Dispatch* called the ESL of Richmond wise for refuting such behavior, calling the “ill-timed and ill-mannered picketing of the White House” the “worst setback that women’s suffrage has received in many years.”¹⁵⁷ The ESL continually walked a fine line between supporting the work of suffragists as experienced on the national level while simultaneously distancing themselves from suffragist activities that would damage their cause in Virginia.

Throughout the campaign, advertisers used the imagery of the vote to help sell their products. In 1915, an advertisement’s emboldened headline screamed “The Real Suffrage Thought of Women,” then proceeded to announce that “motherhood is the thought uppermost in women’s mind” while advertising a medicine to aid women during pregnancy.¹⁵⁸ Later that same year, an advertisement placed by Sydnor and Hundley, Inc. proclaimed in large, bold print, “Votes for Women” then continued with “every woman with the privilege of voting would vote to possess one of our beautiful mahogany desks.”¹⁵⁹ Not only did these advertisers hope to reel in sales, but their own positions on the issue can be assumed when portraying the vote as a privilege to be regulated and restricted rather than a right.

Advertisements by the ESL and the NAWSA began appearing as the amendment's ratification battle came around to the states. Attempting to reconcile states' rights with both woman suffrage and the federal amendment for the vote, one headline read "Stand by the Rights of the States and the Rights of the people WOMEN ARE PEOPLE."¹⁶⁰ Below this headline stood a map of the United States labeled "Suffrage Victory Map," showing which states had woman suffrage and to what extent. According to the advertisement, the map "shows why Congress passes the Federal suffrage amendment—why it is now too late for a State amendment. Democracy is at high tide."¹⁶¹ While people argued the merits and the pitfalls of the amendment in states throughout the country, the ESL of Virginia continued its heightened publicity. In November 1919, the organization held its eighth convention, and in a speech by Mrs. Raymond Brown, the fourth vice president of NAWSA, she remarked, "No such burden of shame has been put on the women of any other country as that requiring American women to go through grueling political campaigns before being granted the right of suffrage by their menfolk."¹⁶² Despite such entreaties, women remained without the vote, and perhaps no factor can better explain why than the issues of white supremacy surrounding race.

"The statement that woman is weaker than man is sheer rot: It is the same sort of thing we hear about 'darker races' and 'lower classes' . . ."¹⁶³ With this statement, W.E.B. DuBois lashed out at the sexism blocking woman suffrage by comparing it to the racism encountered by the black community. From arguments ranging from states' rights to voting qualifications, race was often central to the rhetoric of both the suffragists and the antis in Richmond. Not only was race used in these arguments

concerning woman suffrage, but the question of black male voters also entered the debate, as white women sometimes vehemently used the black male vote to highlight an injustice directed solely against them.

References to black men and their potential vote peppered editorials. Responding to a letter stating that women must prepare for the vote in order to be ready to use it properly when it comes, a writer sought to know “how long the negroes spent in getting ready to vote?”¹⁶⁴ This writer disparaged the idea that women must prepare for something bestowed on black men with no such consideration. Many white women resented laws enfranchising what they considered to be ignorant, unworthy black males while they remained without the vote. Others noted how those “who are clamoring for woman suffrage here seem to close their eyes and thoughts resolutely against the colored woman.”¹⁶⁵ In writing this statement, A.J. Huff did not hope to right a grand injustice but rather to question, “Wouldn’t the net practical result be four coloured women going on the registration lists and to the polls for every one white woman?”¹⁶⁶

Several arguments arose addressing the question of which race of women would outvote the other in Richmond. In a letter written by grocer Saxon Holt of Newport News, Holt wrote that his opposition to woman suffrage arose from his belief “that if woman suffrage was adopted in Virginia, the results would be that it would be hard to get the white woman of the State to go to the polls and vote when they would have to come in contact with negro women.”¹⁶⁷ In contrast, knowing the restrictions forbidding most black men from voting, another writer insisted it would be “almost idle to reply to the inane remarks about women having to rub elbows and

jostle with negroes and roughs at the polls, as men do not find it at all necessary to submit to anything of the kind when they go to vote.”¹⁶⁸ Suffragists could thereby argue that the same laws and practices preventing black men from voting would be applied equally to black women. Hence, they attempted to assure Virginians that voting qualifications would not be negated for either black men or black women if women were given the vote.

Opponents of woman suffrage repeatedly used the issue of states’ rights to strip down the Fifteenth amendment and to argue against any federal amendment concerning woman suffrage. At a meeting where she spoke, suffragist Carrie Catt recalled “look[ing] at the men, most of them crouching behind an old tradition of State sovereignty and a pitiful make-believe fear of Negro domination.”¹⁶⁹ As the *New Orleans Times-Democrat* reported in 1913, the South remained “naturally and violently opposed to any more national legislation or to any constitutional amendment on suffrage.”¹⁷⁰ It further declared, “The war amendment adopted in 1867, which gave the negro the ballot, was one of the colossal mistakes of the last century and inflicted untold damage on the South . . .”¹⁷¹ The *Richmond Times-Dispatch* agreed: “If you want to know why a negro can be a citizen, you need not look far to find the reason. It was because of pure, unadulterated malice towards the South.”¹⁷² Any reference to race and the “injustice” of the Fifteenth amendment being forced upon the South insured a response from both white supremacists and states’ rights advocates against a proposed federal woman suffrage amendment.

Throughout the debate over woman suffrage, many Southern states’ legislators stood steadfast behind the idea of states’ rights. This states’ rights

ideology complicated the suffrage movement in the South. Because of the federal government's implementation of the amendments franchising and giving citizenship to black men following the Civil War and its occupation of the region during Reconstruction, many Southerners adamantly opposed any suffrage amendment coming by way of the federal government. Advocating states' rights, they often pointed to the national government railroading them into legislation that should be for each individual state to decide. The Civil War Amendments, which included the enfranchisement of black men, became, to several states, the primary symbol of federal authority imposing unwanted regulations on the states. Also, states' rights rhetoric often contained overtly racist tones. Virginia proved to be no exception. As in the case of enfranchising black men, states' rights advocates could stand behind the banner of states' rights to thwart woman suffrage and by doing so, they could safely assure their own control of the electorate.

Rather than making an explicit argument that they did not want women (or blacks) to vote, states' righters could simply use the shield of states' rights to fight their cause. Knowing that their individual states would not pass enfranchisement laws, they could ensure their own supremacy if only they could thwart federal mandates. Throughout the campaign for woman suffrage, Richmond's leading newspaper, the *Times-Dispatch*, never wavered from its stance of condemning any federal action on the grounds of states' rights. As early as 1915, when reporting on the woman suffrage resolution's failure in DC, the paper stated that "it is a tribute to the sound good sense of Southern women who favor suffrage that most of them are opposed to the Federal Amendment plan . . . they understand that it can be obtained at

too high a price.”¹⁷³ This attitude did not abate as the years progressed. In 1917, declaring that “woman’s suffrage is a purely State matter,” an editorial declared the push for a federal amendment to enfranchise women to be “misguided zeal, and probably will fail again and again, just as it deserves to fail.”¹⁷⁴ While it stated that “no antisuffragist can honestly question the right of a State to enfranchise its women if a fair majority of its voters so decree,” it further declared that “every antisuffragist has a very genuine right to oppose the imposition of equal suffrage upon a State which does not want it.”¹⁷⁵

Members of the ESL sought to distinguish themselves from the national movement that promoted woman suffrage by way of a federal amendment. In 1917, a letter to the editor of the *Times-Dispatch* clarified the differences between the ESL of Virginia and the Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage, chiefly by outlining their different perspectives toward the focus of the proposed federal woman suffrage amendment. The letter highlighted the fact that the ESL had adopted a new constitution at its 1916 state convention in Norfolk. “The object of this organization shall be to advance the legal, industrial, and educational rights of women, and to secure suffrage for women on equal terms with men by appropriate State and national legislation.”¹⁷⁶ The letter writer noted that while the Congressional Union worked solely for the national amendment and explicitly against the party in power as long as woman suffrage remained unfulfilled, the ESL instead worked for both the state and national amendments, but they particularly stressed state work and maintained a nonpartisan stance. Trying to distance itself from an organization committed solely to the national cause and to better align itself with the cry for states’ rights overtaking

Virginia, the ESL worked both sides of the debate. Despite the ESL's emphasis on state work, however, when woman suffrage continued to be rejected by the General Assembly, the ESL began to focus more exclusively on the possibility of working toward a federal amendment.¹⁷⁷

Woman suffrage via a federal amendment received particularly scathing commentary in the Richmond papers. Alexis Jones called woman suffrage “the most dangerous and poisonous change in the Federal Constitution that has ever been attempted.”¹⁷⁸ In arguing for states' rights, editorials claimed Virginia's power to regulate the vote as its “ancient right of self-determination” which “the obnoxious Anthony amendment” threatened to forever revoke.¹⁷⁹ C. Conway Baker called the issue “purely a State and domestic issue” which Virginia should solely decide because, in a not-so-subtle allusion to the 15th Amendment, “we have had enough of snapshot ratification without any referendum in this State.”¹⁸⁰ The franchise became touted as “the sole remaining vestige of State rights—control of the source whence all power is derived.”¹⁸¹ Even with the ratification of the amendment well under way, states' righters still railed against it in the summer of 1920, claiming that the amendment asked “the States to sell their sovereignty! Will a Judas be found among the Southern States?”¹⁸² In August 1919, an editorial in the *Times-Dispatch* assessed: “There exists no doubt that the sentiment of the people of Virginia is overwhelmingly against ratification. Representative expressions of public opinion from every section of the state, as voiced in letters published in the Times-Dispatch, alone afford convincing proof . . . of the public attitude of irreconcilable opposition to the amendment.”¹⁸³

The uniqueness of the South, denoted as “Southern exceptionalism,” often arose frequently in debates over states rights, which often presented a thinly veiled racism behind its lofty rhetoric. Many people commented on the passage of the federal amendments following the Civil War, which awarded citizenship and the franchise to black men. A member of Virginia’s General Assembly called their passage “a disastrous experience” and further extrapolated that “Southern women at that time opposed the Federal government’s invasion into the right of States to regulate suffrage, and I have not seen or heard anything that convinces me that the Southern women of today have discarded the views of their mothers.” Alexis Jones announced that, decades ago, “misguided people of the North told us that the negro man was entitled to vote—in fact, that the negro knew better how to vote than the white man.”¹⁸⁴ Continuing his litany, he referenced back to the horrors when black men voted, announcing: “What awful days those were for white and black alike!” and he despised the fact that “now we are told by fanatics and shouters that women, white and black, can run the government better than white men. Are the thinking people of this country to surrender to every craze that is started?”¹⁸⁵ Clearly, these commentators would stand for no federal suffrage amendment that would, in their opinions, repeat past horrors of federally-enacted legislation.

Southern states’ rights advocates found Northern allies. A member of New Hampshire’s legislature believed that the Anthony amendment would “give to the negro woman of Alabama and South Carolina a part in the government of New Hampshire” because “the infringement of States’ rights in the distinctly local matter of suffrage forebodes evil consequences to [every] state.”¹⁸⁶ As a solution to the

suffrage question, one writer, seemingly with little concern, stated that the black vote would be combated by not ratifying the woman suffrage amendment and acting “with the same resourcefulness that it acted when the time came to drive the ignorant negro man from Southern politics.”¹⁸⁷ However, some writers criticized the racist argument promoting states’ rights as a method to deny political access. As one writer forwardly asserted, “States’ rights would have kept negroes in slavery. It now wishes to keep women in political slavery.”¹⁸⁸

III

RACE AND WHITE SUPREMACY IN RICHMOND'S SUFFRAGE DEBATES

Some voices in the debate refuted the notion that woman suffrage could threaten white supremacy. In a letter written to the editor of a Virginia paper, a writer insisted that “in Virginia and in the South as a whole, the Negro composes only 32% of the population! The white woman alone outnumbers the entire colored population male and female.”¹⁸⁹ Continuing on, the writer reasoned that it was “needless to say that the vote of the illiterate and unintelligent negro woman would be reduced by the same laws which restrict the vote of the men of that race.”¹⁹⁰ These writers certainly made no plea for racial equality but instead reiterated the popular suffragist stance that women’s vote would only further ensure white supremacy. An article in the nation’s leading black newspaper, the *Chicago Defender*, announced: “The southern states have found a way to retain the supremacy of the white man at the polls and it is safe to believe they will do likewise where our women are concerned.”¹⁹¹ The *Defender* recognized that just as Southern states had attempted to nullify amendments giving both the vote and citizenship to black men, they would now employ the same argument to keep women of any race away from the polls.

The racism of Richmond’s white newspapers, while sometimes hidden behind arguments such as state sovereignty, did emerge in more obvious manners. In 1914, the *Richmond News-Leader* sponsored a contest for the best antisuffrage argument, promising the winner a prize of ten dollars and publication of the winner’s photograph in the paper. The winner, Nannie Goode, wrote that suffrage did not suit women “because it would mean an unwise expenditure of nerve energy . . . Through

devoted wifhood, motherhood, sisterhood, and gentle comradeship, [woman] stamps her desires on the hearts of men and—rules.”¹⁹² While the paper announced Goode as the prize winner, the photograph never appeared because, as the national black magazine, *The Crisis*, reported, Goode was a black woman. While it cannot be ascertained whether the paper chose not to publish the photo out of its own racism or whether it did not want to harm the antisuffrage campaign by making a connection to a black supporter, Goode’s blackness was obviously at the center of why she would not appear on the pages of the *News-Leader*.

The issue of race and white supremacy seemed to guide many arguments around woman suffrage. As one Virginia newspaper editor wrote, “The Negro exerts more power in Southern politics than white people do. But it is a negative power . . . Rather than enfranchise *some* black women, [they] would keep the suffrage from *all* white women.”¹⁹³ This argument underscores how Southern politics functioned. Every issue had a “black” side, in that politicians as well as the public at large gauged every measure’s racial implications, and if the consequences would include some benefits to blacks, then that measure often failed.

Regardless of how prominently white supremacy figured into the rise of the woman suffrage movement in the South, it can hardly be discounted since nearly every political, economic, and social issue in the South involved the issue of race. It soon took center stage in the debates and remained a significant focal point throughout the push for the Nineteenth amendment. Both suffragists and antisuffragists shaped racist arguments to further their own causes, but the black community also shaped responses to questions of woman suffrage, and these

arguments often included a broader picture of suffrage for both black men and women, particularly in light of the 1902 rewriting of the Virginia Constitution which slashed the number of eligible black male voters from 147,000 to a mere 21,000.¹⁹⁴

Virginia's General Assembly did not stand alone as the sole institution attempting to restrict the rights of black citizens during the early years of the twentieth century. At the NAWSA's 1903 convention, the organization, in response to questions about membership eligibility requirements and rules, announced that it sought "to do away with the requirement of a sex qualification for suffrage. What other qualifications shall be asked for, it leaves to each state."¹⁹⁵ This pronouncement opened the door for southern state chapters of NAWSA to explicitly exclude nonwhite members if they so desired and to work solely for a state amendment. However, it also refused to work solely for white women, despite the urging of such suffrage leaders as Kate Gordon. While it never officially excluded black women from memberships, its leaders actively prevented black women from attending national conventions and public events. In a 1913 suffrage parade, black women could only participate if they marched in "the colored delegation." Furthermore, the NAWSA summarily denied petitions from black women wanting to be delegates at national conventions out of fear of alienating Southern white women from the movement and possibly due to their own racism.

Prior to such exclusion, black women played much more integral roles in women's rights organizations and conventions. In the biracial coalition of the American Equal Rights Association (AERA), both black and white activists worked toward women's suffrage after the Civil War. As early as 1851, Sojourner Truth

advocated for women's rights, and Frances E. W. Harper, at an 1866 convention, addressed the precarious position of black women: "You white women speak here of rights. I speak of wrongs. I, as a colored woman, have had . . . an education which has made me feel as if I were in the situation of Ishmael, my hand against every man, and every man's hand against me."¹⁹⁶ After the NAWSA's decision, previously interracial associations, such as the early South Carolina league, rapidly vanished. While sexism shaped the experiences of both black and white women, black women alone bore the double burden of sexism and racism.

The NAWSA failed to deal a blow to racism by not establishing an official policy of racial inclusivity, and the antisuffragists continued to employ the question of race to stir up fervor against woman suffrage. In a tract they distributed across Virginia, the antis explained that the enfranchisement of women would "disrupt and disturb . . . the peaceful and contented relations of the races" and argued that woman suffrage would "double the number of uncertain and dangerous votes and put the balance of political power at the mercy of 165,000 colored women."¹⁹⁷ In a similar letter submitted to the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, the antis also emphasized to the newspaper's readership that the power of the vote would be placed in the hands of black women "only to gratify the whims of a small group of women who don't really know what they are about."¹⁹⁸ By trying to both arouse fears of the black vote and to show most women as disinterested in regards to voting, the antis hoped to increase their pool of supporters.

Black women maintained a long tradition of organization and leadership in the South, dating back to Reconstruction. They worked through temperance

organizations, church organizations, and hundreds of women's clubs to address specific social conditions while simultaneously contributing to the "uplift" of the larger black community. Sometimes, they supported women's causes ignored by white women. For example, prior to 1908, the only subscribers to the *Woman's Journal* in Alabama consisted of black women or black organizations.¹⁹⁹ In Richmond, black women organized the Negro Organizational Society of Virginia, the Virginia Federation of Colored Women's Club, the Richmond Council of Colored women, Baptist missionary societies, and political secret societies such as the Rising Daughters of Liberty to raise funds, to rally, to urge voter registration, and to promote various sociopolitical causes as they promoted reform-minded politics and social work. Although recruiting new members and educating the public became the top priority of Virginia suffragists, white suffragists continually ostracized black women from this recruitment. Despite exclusion from the white ranks of suffragists, historian Ann Gordon found that "during the last eight years before ratification of the federal amendment, coalitions of black men and black women on national and local levels fought white supremacy."²⁰⁰

Suffragists appeared no more supportive of assistance from the black community than the antis, on whom Elna Green places the badge of racism. Black women workers in Virginia also exerted their power by striking. In 1917, three hundred black women working at the American Cigar Company's local stemmery in Norfolk struck for three weeks to protest the company's refusal to pay them a living wage.²⁰¹ Despite their inability to vote, black women actively involved themselves in politics, and they particularly helped exert a group presence at the polls to insure that

the few black men who held the franchise could exercise it. Elsa Barkley Brown notes that black women often saw the votes of black men as being cast toward a common goal, constructing an idea of a collective enfranchisement. “African American women, unable to cast a separate vote,” she writes, “viewed African American men’s vote as equally theirs.”²⁰² While no evidence exists of a black organization devoted specifically to woman suffrage in Richmond, suffrage for both black women and men were often announced as central goals in various clubs and societies. Additionally, when women did receive the vote in 1920, black women in Richmond “marched to the local courthouse to register; they voted when allowed to do so; and they organized the Virginia Negro Woman’s League of Voters.”²⁰³

The church also played a crucial role in the lives of black women, largely due to the fact that the church as an organizational body held a particular significance for black Americans who were often disbarred from other political outlets controlled exclusively by whites, such as the political process of election. Evelyn Higgenbotham, discussing the period between 1880 and 1920, found that “the church served as the most effective vehicle by which African-American men and women alike, pushed down by racism and poverty, regrouped and rallied against emotional and physical defeat.”²⁰⁴ Black churches functioned as “the only viable bastion of a community under assault” and allowed that community to function within its confines as “an agency of social control, forum of discussion and debate, promoter of education and economic cooperation, and arena for the development and assertion of leadership.”²⁰⁵ By 1916, the National Baptists, an African-American Baptist organization, counted nearly three million members, had the third largest religious

body in the U.S. and represented the largest denomination in Richmond, black or white.²⁰⁶

Black women in the church asserted their skills in organization and campaigning to raise awareness and funding for a variety of causes. Often, they held prominent, powerful roles within the church, but they held them unofficially in that the stated power often resided in the exclusively male enclave of ministers. In 1916, at the Fifth African Baptist Church, Patsy Smith faced a charge of disorderly conduct “and the sad part about it is . . . equal suffrage is back of all the trouble.”²⁰⁷ While women often unofficially held quite potent power, they often faced denial of a vote in church affairs. The pastor, Parson Daly, upon commencing a business meeting, looked over the assemblage and seeing Smith, a woman, refused to start until she left. Refusing to rise from her seat, the parson told two men to eject her. The paper noted that Smith may have been disgruntled over the dismissal of a previous pastor, but police officer John Crutchfield held another view. According to him, “in 1880 while I was a senior justice . . . the women raised a howl for a vote in the affairs of this church. . . I gave them the right to the ballot. Since then—well, I wouldn’t like to say.”²⁰⁸ Published under the headline, “Equal Suffrage the Cause of Row in Church,” the article showed that while women had held the ballot in church affairs for nearly forty years, their presence still often created little disguised annoyance and contempt from the male members and pastorate. Disruptions over equal suffrage in the often politically-charged air of the black church concisely revealed that similar dishevels existed over equal suffrage in questions of political elections outside of the institution of the church.

In terms of gender, women accounted for no less than two-thirds of the black Baptist convention movement, and visibly participated in its many fundraising activities. This convention provided black women with the space needed to participate in self-government through separatist organizations. The black church “offered black women a forum through which to articulate a public discourse critical of women’s subordination” and the women’s movement within the church itself “imaged itself both as part of the black community and as part of an evangelical sisterhood that cut across racial lines.”²⁰⁹ Women worked through the church in a number of public ways, including social activism. In terms of gender equality and the church, “racial consciousness placed black women squarely beside black men in a movement for racial self-determination” invalidating rigid gender dichotomies.²¹⁰ Higgenbotham also discusses how this system was influenced by society’s placement of masculine traits on whites and feminine traits, such as emotion, meekness, and religion, on blacks. However, in all matters concerning the black church, she stresses the multiple discourses within the church itself. She writes that the church should be viewed as “a complex body of shifting cultural, ideological, and political significations” while simultaneously serving as a “racially bounded” community free of white control.²¹¹ Like the black press which fostered a sense of community, the church likewise held this function, although it still functioned in the larger space of American society and did not remain free of dominant society. The church produced leaders at varying levels that fostered a black collective will. While it should be noted that some saw woman suffrage as a way to uplift the race as a whole and to reverse the discrimination of the race, “they also perceived suffrage as a weapon for

protecting their own rights as women”²¹² by advocating for improved working conditions, higher wages, better education, legal justice, and an end to lynching.

Some black leaders, however, such as temperance reformer Annie Blackwell, held little faith in a potential amendment for woman suffrage, believing that it would be followed by “grandmother clauses” to exclude black women just as black men had been excluded in the past. While she used this assumption to oppose the effort as detrimental to the black race since it would mean one more legal restriction aimed specifically at the black populace, others obviously felt differently, which is evidenced by Ida Wells-Barnett’s formation of the Alpha Suffrage Club in 1913 as the first organization of black women devoted specifically to obtaining the vote. Reasons why black women should vote included those typical to everyone, such as their rights as citizens, but they also included the unique idea of using the vote to help the race as a whole, to create racial “uplift” and racial solidarity to progress in the face of systematic oppression.

Antis played on white fears of black women voting. Some antis countered pro-suffrage voices by contending that while black women would rush to the polls, white women would largely stay home. One North Carolina state senator voiced this concern, saying that while his wife would not vote, his cook (who was presumably black) would. Responding in a similar vein, the Virginia Antisuffrage Association argued that it would be ten times more difficult to prevent black women from voting than black men.²¹³ Assuming that violence could be used more easily as a deterrent against black men than black women, the Association embodied the widespread fear in the white community of “Negro domination.” According to Senator John Williams

of Mississippi, “We are not afraid to maul a black man over the head if he dares to vote, but we can’t treat women that way. No, we’ll allow no woman suffrage.”²¹⁴

Focusing on the uniqueness of the South, one writer reasoned that the South consistently condemned woman suffrage “because our safety requires us to do so.” In this author’s eyes, whites retained a fragile hold on supremacy after “the last great experiment in extending suffrage” which constituted “a hideous mistake and crime.”²¹⁵ While some advocated that standards applied to black men could simply be transferred to black women, others lamented that “if methods of intimidation and violence have been used anywhere, they could not be applied against women of any race. We cannot imitate the Hun in any emergency.”²¹⁶ To many white supremacists, “the sudden enfranchisement of the colored woman would reopen the whole deadly trying question of the negro in our politics”²¹⁷ and that placed them in solid opposition to woman suffrage. Evoking fears of miscegenation, one antisuffragist believed the question of woman suffrage involved “the purity of Anglo-Saxon blood.” The *Times-Dispatch* quoted Senator Berah from Idaho as remarking that “the North had agreed tacitly that the fifteenth amendment should remain a dead letter,” allowing the South to settle its own racial problems.²¹⁸ Yet a commentator stressed that the enfranchisement of black women could “break the South as a solid Democratic force” and questioned how the new vote should be broken since “the suppression of the man vote taxed all the ingenuity and courage of the white men . . . the colored woman vote makes an entirely new problem . . . night riding or shotguns would not be available against women or for use by white suffragettes.”²¹⁹ Continually, writers used the idea of normative gender ideologies which supposedly forbid the use of violence against

women as a reason to prevent woman suffrage. While seeming to tacitly admit the use of violence against black men, these same commentators ignored the history of lynching and its use against both black men and black women.

To combat the argument that woman suffrage should be prevented because of the threat of black women storming the polls, the ESL of Virginia responded with broadsides assuring the public that black women would not be enfranchised. The same restrictions placed on male voters to be equally placed on women, such as literacy tests, poll taxes, a possible property requirement, and the “we outnumber them” rationale. According to the ESL, nearly two hundred thousand more white women of voting age resided in Virginia than black women, and furthermore, white women outnumbered both black men and women by over thirty thousand heads. Rather than reject the racism surrounding the antis’ rhetoric, the ESL chose to endorse it by constructing their own racist arguments. Lila Valentine, president of the ESL, remarked: “The farcical assumption of the antis that if women were given the ballot, the negro woman would learn to read and write overnight, would go hungry to pay their poll tax of \$1.50 and immediately obtain absolute control of some twenty counties in Virginia is not to be considered seriously.”²²⁰ Essentially, the ESL ridiculed the idea that black men or women would surmount barriers to enfranchisement and called the idea that they would gain power a false assumption crafted by the antis to scare white Virginians away from woman suffrage.

The Equal Suffrage League labored to crawl out from under the white hysteria about ensuing black domination throughout their campaign for woman suffrage. In a telegraph sent to the ESL, W.T. Mayo failed “to see the danger of the Federal

Amendment. The women of our day can be trusted to elevate the balance above the danger of negro dominancy.”²²¹ The ESL published a broadside addressing five reasons why women’s enfranchisement would leave white supremacy intact. The same qualifications applicable to men would be applied equally to women, many blacks would be unable to afford the \$1.50 poll tax, and they would fail the literacy test in much greater numbers since twenty-two percent of the black population was reportedly illiterate compared to eight percent of the white population. Furthermore, the ESL alluded to the possibility of adding a property requirement to voter eligibility, and they professed that white dominance would only become further entrenched since around 190,000 more white women of voting age resided in Virginia than black women.²²² W.T. Mayo furthered this claim by remarking that “there are 29,079 more white women in Virginia *than the whole negro population.*”²²³ However, others warned against using figures to show how white women outnumbered both sexes of the black population. Kate Gordon, writing to various suffrage leagues in the South, cautioned, “Be very careful . . . The ‘solid South’ exists to protect those States where contested negro localities threaten white supremacy.”²²⁴ Gordon herself opposed the black vote as well as woman suffrage via a federal amendment, calling the 14th and 15th amendments to the Constitution force legislation which constituted the “blackest pages” of reconstruction history.²²⁵

The League’s Secretary, Ida M. Thompson, wrote that black women voters would be no more menacing than black men voters because “white supremacy is maintained in both cases by the restrictions imposed by each State Constitution. It goes without saying that each State Legislature will take all necessary steps to make

these restrictions apply to the woman voter when the federal amendment is ratified.”²²⁶ In other words, urge the states to ratify woman suffrage and then leave it to them to disfranchise, through their State constitutions, any “undesirables” from the polls. One contributor to the *Times-Dispatch* urged the South as a whole to “hasten to write their own State amendments enfranchising their women rather than in a few years to struggle with the ‘grandmother clause.’”²²⁷ Others, however, insisted that “we could not change our constitution in time”²²⁸ to prevent black domination.

Lila Valentine wrote in 1915 that, given the current voting impositions placed on men, “all this talk about negro rule, if women are enfranchised, is nonsense” because “if the educational, poll tax, and residential qualifications prove in any black county insufficient to maintain white supremacy, this additional qualification [property] can be made legal. . .”²²⁹ Some people readily admitted they would willingly support the amendment “provided all of the women who could vote if they were men under the provisions of the State Constitution.”²³⁰ Such statements form the blatantly racist argument which often underlined suffragist arguments. Hugh Stockdell offered his support, but only if convinced “that the majority of white women in Virginia desire this privilege.”²³¹ In a letter from Roanoke’s ESL, the writer viewed woman suffrage as a solution to “the increasing problem of the negro” since suffrage “would materially increase the power of [the white] race to cope with this problem.”²³²

However, some suffragists apparently did advance a platform of equal suffrage for both sexes of all races. In 1919, Senator Byrd professed that “some of the ladies who have approached me [on woman suffrage], I am sorry to say, have

boldly announced to me their view that the negroes, both male and female, should be allowed to vote on the same terms that the white men and women are allowed to vote.” In the letter’s margin, a penciled note announced that these women promoting truly equal suffrage were “probably not from Virginia.”²³³

White supremacists’ struggle to maintain a sharp racial divide occupied a central position in the discourses surrounding woman suffrage because, as Sara Graham noted, “every argument for sexual equality in politics is, and must be, an argument also for racial equality.”²³⁴ Such arguments showed the interconnectedness of racial and gender hierarchies. According to a broadside developed out of an initial article in the Richmond *Evening Journal*, woman suffrage would bring “twenty nine counties . . . under negro rule” and listed these counties where “the colored people would have absolute and immediate control.”²³⁵ Virtually going through the ESL’s checklist of why black domination would never come to pass, this broadside smacked down each of those arguments, commenting that “the literacy test would not work in choking off the colored women vote” since literacy continued to steadily rise in the black population, particularly among women. It lamented that the property qualification would fail to materialize, and “no safeguard would be left but the poll tax; and if colored women knew they could get votes and rule some very rich and important counties by paying \$1.50 a piece, we are inclined to think most of them would be willing to go hungry, if necessary to do it.” Furthermore, these twenty-nine counties would become Republican while “the Democratic party and white rule in Virginia will be swinging a mighty thin line.”²³⁶ As the suffrage debates heated up, black women came under attack as they were increasingly depicted as strong forces

capable of much harm. In U.S. Congressional debates, Representative Clark from Florida depicted some black leaders as “constantly seeking to embroil their people in trouble . . . and the real leaders in these matters are the negro women, who are much more insistent and vicious along these lines than are the men of their race.”²³⁷

Underlying this argument, Clark and others feared that enfranchising black women would mean having to again deal with the question of black men and the franchise. He warned: “Make this amendment a part of the Federal Constitution and the negro women of the Southern States . . . will reawaken in the negro men an intense and not easily quenched desire to again become a political factor.”²³⁸ Woman suffrage not only sparked fears of women usurping their power, but it reopened the issue of black men treading on the power wielded by current politicians and their patrons. A writer in the *Times-Dispatch* agreed, noting how woman suffrage would “add the thoughtless and inexperienced, together with the negro women, who in thirty counties in Virginia largely outnumber the whites.”²³⁹ By pointing to Virginia counties in which white women did not outnumber the black population, antisuffragists hoped to reveal the flaw touting white women’s vote as the lock to secure white supremacy.

Although Emily Perry argued that giving women the vote would decidedly entrench white supremacy for eternity and settle the problem “once and for all, without the necessity for anymore crooked or evasive legislation,”²⁴⁰ some adamantly disputed the argument that white women, due to sheer numbers, would void the black vote, be it male or female. Writing in 1917, the piece argued that simply professing that white women outnumbered both black men and women “quite missed another intensely practical point,” that the ‘desirable’ vote would vote in full strength “and

there is the fallacy in her argument.”²⁴¹ According to the editorial, the ‘desirable’ vote “would be reduced by apathy and further cut virtually in two by positive refusal to vote at all, while the undesirable vote would cast its full possible strength.”²⁴² By this calculation, white women might hesitate to exercise their newly acquired political voice, but black women would rush to the polls in outstandingly high numbers.

White southern supremacists invoked racist stereotypes of black men to combat woman suffrage. Antisuffragists continually constructed images of the hypersexual black man preying on white women as a way to forbid both women and the black community from entering the political domain of white men. The editor of a Georgia newspaper referenced the “lustful” black man attacking women as he reasoned that woman suffrage would awaken the sleeping Fifteenth amendment and bring black men back into politics.

Suffrage debates also involved the issue of black womanhood. An article in the *Virginia Baptist* newsletter urged black women as early as 1890 of the danger of losing their “womanliness” if they sought to preach or to vote. As Elsa Barkley Brown reports, “segregation, lynching, sexual violence, and accusations of immorality denied the protections of womanhood to African American women.”²⁴³

W.E.B. DuBois also recognized the South’s “wanton and continued and persistent insulting of the black womanhood which it sought and seeks to prostitute its lust.”²⁴⁴

Despite false characterizations that epitomized the prejudice mounted against them or perhaps because of them, many black men and women continued to actively support woman suffrage and the Nineteenth amendment. In 1918, the *Richmond Planet* reported: “The American colored women should be aroused as never before . .

.At the smallest calculation, three million colored women will receive the ballot, which is the greatest power that has been given us since the emancipation, to correct some of the evils that have cursed us.”²⁴⁵ The article continued by outlining how women could use their votes to attack the Jim Crow laws of the South and, in this manner, improve the conditions of the race as a whole, exactly as whites feared.

Others, however, dismissed black women as an empty threat. One questioned: “Why all this noise about the negro women sending us back to the carpetbagger days?”²⁴⁶ This writer pointed out that “all the negro men I know in this section don’t vote by any means” and flippantly assessed that “there may be a few white women in the South with sufficient patriotism and enough interest outside of their powder puffs and their moth-eaten traditions to take the trouble to go to the polls, just to balance the negro woman vote if for nothing more.”²⁴⁷ Again, suffragists maintained racism as a plank in their campaign by repeatedly highlighting and promoting racialized voting restrictions.

Another commentator, writing in the summer of 1919, called blacks loyal and brave but hypothesized that German propagandists may have sown “seeds of unrest” which “are beginning to bear the inevitable fruit of dissatisfaction and disorder.”²⁴⁸ He called the recent race riots a case of nerves, maintained that both races held equal responsibility for them, and concluded that “the United States is big enough for both races, and there is no reason why they should not dwell in amity as they always have done. They can if they will but listen to wise counsel and be guided by moderation.”²⁴⁹ A writer penning a letter later in the year praised the loyalty and patriotism of blacks “although German propaganda, I.W.W. literature, and radical

treatises have been poured upon the negro” and congratulated Virginia “on her kindly race relations, absence of lynch law and mob violence.”²⁵⁰ While some commentators praised the black community on the surface, they often continued to allude to the race’s ignorance and susceptibility. No equality of mind had been recognized by any means in these discourses.

Sentiment for and against woman suffrage ran both ways in the black press as it did in the white press. The *Richmond Planet* did appear more supportive of woman suffrage, although its pages often reflected other more pressing threats and rights, such as lynching and the fact that most black males did not have the franchise. In light of the fact that many black men lacked the ability to vote, *The Crisis* asked in 1912 “what could be more absurd than to see one group of human beings who are denied rights which they are trying to secure for themselves working to prevent another group from obtaining the same rights?”²⁵¹ Writers often cited several reasons why blacks of both genders should support woman suffrage. First, “whatever concerns half mankind concerns us.” Secondly, “any agitation, discussion or reopening of the problem of voting must inevitably be a discussion of the right of black folk to vote in America and Africa,” and finally, “votes for women mean votes for black men.”²⁵² Clearly, many blacks saw the question of woman suffrage as a method to once again pry the lid off of suffrage in the hopes of realizing black suffrage for both sexes since it had summarily been denied to most black men for decades.

In a 1916 issue of *The Crisis*, W.E.B. DuBois addressed what he termed the five “legal” methods of disfranchisement, which included crime, property, poll taxes,

education, and grandfather clauses. He also quoted Virginia's 1902 Constitution as establishing a hereditary privilege intentionally crafted to disfranchise black men and certain classes of white men as well. The Constitution read that "at such registration, every male citizen of the U.S. having the qualifications of age and residence required . . . shall be entitled to register, if he be: FIRST. A person who prior to the adopting of this Constitution, served in time of war . . . or SECOND. A son of any such person."²⁵³ By citing the grandfather clause entrenched in Virginia's voting regulations, DuBois not only highlighted the precarious position of black male voters in Virginia, but he also must have been pondering how such restrictions would be employed against black women.

Like white women, black women also had to confront the dominant gender ideologies which they were pressed to follow. On the *Planet's* woman page in 1913, an excerpt from Cardinal Gibbons admonished that "equal rights do not imply that both sexes should engage promiscuously in the same pursuit" and warned that "as soon as a woman trenches on the domain of man she must not be surprised that the reverence once accorded her in the past has been wholly or in part withdrawn and that she is soiled with the dust of the political arena."²⁵⁴ Juxtaposed with a poem entitled "It Takes a Man," the articles warned women of the dangers of losing their "special place" within society if they pushed for entrance into the man's political sphere. To cast a vote would be to corrupt the family by women conducting a decidedly political act outside of the home.

Some states used the push for a woman suffrage amendment and the reopening of the suffrage question as a time to question the validity of the 15th

amendment and to call for its repeal. In 1914, after the Senate defeated the woman suffrage bill, Senator Vardaman of Mississippi called for the repeal of the Fifteenth amendment. While supported by both of Virginia's senators, Martin and Swanson, the Senate ultimately outvoted him, 48 to 19. Senator John Williams, also of Mississippi, presented a resolution in which only white women would be enfranchised. While the resolution lost by a wide margin of 44 to 21, "it brought into the limelight the race question and showed just how many United States Senators were ready and willing to wipe from the Constitution the practical results of the War between the States."²⁵⁵ Raising two prongs of the race issue, these senators addressed both the race question in terms of woman suffrage as well as the broader questions concerning race and the vote, which woman suffrage again brought to the surface. Ironically, those calling most vocally for the suffrage qualifications to fall along racial lines represented states in which severe methods had been employed to keep blacks from the polls. As L.M. Hershaw wrote in 1915, "as regards the ballot, men and women are equal in the District of Columbia; both are deprived of it."²⁵⁶ Others wrote on the allowance by the federal government of the states to effectively nullify the Fifteenth amendment, remarking that "some of the so-called states were and are nothing more nor less than despotic oligarchies."²⁵⁷

The *Planet* noted an episode in 1915 in which John Taylor, who had voted in a previous primary election, petitioned the precinct's election judges for a ballot to vote in the Democratic primary but was refused. The paper concluded that "the new instructions deny to colored men the right to vote in Democratic primaries, even when held under the provisions of the State law."²⁵⁸ In other accounts, the *Planet* noted

how the disfranchisement of black men had led to the disfranchisement of several groups of white men, while “the race cry reverberated from one section of the country to the other.”²⁵⁹ As a result, the *Planet* concluded that despite a population of well over two million, Virginia polled less than 140,000 votes in 1912. However, it saw this low turnout as justification for the disfranchised black populace that the State Constitution now denied the vote to significant portions of the white population. Calling this circumstance an intervention of God, the *Planet* noted, “Just as the English sparrows brought here to destroy other pests have become pests themselves, so the elimination of the colored vote intended to give white men a greater radius of action has produced the opposite results.”²⁶⁰ In 1920, the *Planet* argued for a federal bureau to properly enforce the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments of the Constitution as it addressed the question of woman suffrage and whether the state or federal government should determine voting qualifications. It questioned Virginia’s wish to determine the question of woman suffrage since it “takes the same position relative to its colored population. It insists upon its rights to make such restrictions as it pleases in the exercise of the franchise.” Via this method of states’ rights, “personal rights have been obliterated and the fundamental guarantee of the Constitution nullified.”²⁶¹

The *Planet* also reported on other racial hypocrisies that arose in Richmond in an attempt to argue against these gross disparities. In 1915, a “purity squad” raided a disorderly house in which white men obviously sought the companionship of the black women of the house. The *Planet* wrote: “Here is your problem. . . What will be done about it? If colored men had been found in a similar relationship with dissolute white women, a continuing howl would have gone up from one section of this State to

the other.”²⁶² Yet, this raid had produced no such outcry because white men still retained socially accepted access to black women whereas black men did not in regards to white women.

Some women advanced suffrage in rather unique ways. In 1916, the *Planet* reported on schoolteachers playing a game of basketball, with the Feminists taking on the Suffragists. Other organized groups pushed for the vote more formally. In January 1920, several hundred people gathered at St. Luke Auditorium to form the Independent Voters League, which was to be “nonpartisan in its make-up and stands firmly for the uplift and unification of the race.”²⁶³ Such an organization would have been particularly important in fostering a group presence at the polls, with a specific emphasis on the uplift and advancement of the black race as a whole rather than on a specific political party. Also in 1920, black citizens held a meeting at True Reformers Hall to protest their exclusion from the Richmond Republican party meeting.²⁶⁴ Later that year, an open letter from the National Equal Rights League, “organized to promote equality of rights without exception for race,” appeared in the *Planet*. The letter exalted the support of “the gifted orators of the Colored race which came to [the women movement’s] rescue with their genius” and argued for the NAWSA and others “to stand firm and strong against any color line in the possession now of the suffrage now.”²⁶⁵ Having officially gained suffrage, the organization now hoped that, in fact, women of all races would be allowed to vote.

The issue of black women’s participation in politics requires a look beyond the traditional avenues of participation. On March 20, 1920, the *Planet* ran an excerpt from LaGrange, Kentucky reporting how Annie Sibs Banks recently became

the first black woman to sit as a delegate in a Kentucky Republican convention. The article proceeded to note that “this is the first time in the history of the South when Negro women have taken any apparent interest in politics” and that “added interest was given to the meeting by the presence in the hall of other Negro women . . . it was the first time any of them had ever attended any sort of convention aside from church or lodge affairs.”²⁶⁶ The article chose to note their seemingly tardy entrance as delegates as proof of their previous disinterest rather than their work through a variety of club and church organizations which had overtly political ties and in which their work received ready acceptance and appreciation. Commenting later on the national Republican convention, an article stated that “colored women, present for the first time as delegates, stood firmly for the candidacy of the colored man, and they refused to be stampeded even by the representation of the colored men who entered into the agreement which killed the chance for a Negro congressional nominee.”²⁶⁷

Ethnicity also became mixed in with the question of race and gender in the rhetoric of suffrage. In writing on the horrors of woman suffragists who wore “a coat of many colors, made up of pacifism, socialism, radicalism, and feminism, for they love gaudy colors,” Nellie Henson continued by pointing to the election of who she thought to be a disreputable Chicago mayor who received votes from “the German wards . . . ‘the black belt’ and then the women helped.”²⁶⁸ At the same time, in the midst of the war, a Virginia representative introduced a bill in Congress that “no person not a citizen of the U.S. shall be permitted to vote in any election . . . who is a subject of any state or nation with which the U.S. is at war.” Calling these people “resident enemies,” the writer insisted that these voters “may, in effect, stab the U.S.

in the back by his vote.” While warning Congress of its inability to usurp states’ rights in dictating the terms of local elections, the editorial urged that “Congress owes it to itself and to the Federal government as a whole to disfranchise every unnaturalized German and Austrian in the United States.”²⁶⁹ The editor obviously saw no hypocrisy in calling upon the federal government to regulate the “alien vote” in federal elections while attacking the very notion of any regulation of woman suffrage, and it certainly never advanced an idea that the federal government should be allowed to establish who may or may not vote in federal elections in terms of sex as long as they leave regulation of state and local elections to those respective entities.

The question of race and newspapers also presented a complex problem. Often, white newspapers courted the advertising dollars and money from a potential black readership, but it also meant curbing what could otherwise be a sharply racist tone. In response to the *News-Leader*’s failure to publish its essay winner’s picture, Goode, because she was black, a national black magazine deduced that “the *News-Leader*, a ‘white’ afternoon paper of Richmond, Va, is ‘opposed’ to woman suffrage and also to Negroes.”²⁷⁰ In an advertisement appearing in the *Richmond Planet* for the *Richmond Evening Journal*, the advertisement hoped to convince the black readership of the *Planet* that the *Journal* was “a fair journal” and further professed that “THE COLORED PEOPLE of Richmond have always appreciated a good daily paper and the minimum cost of one cent must appeal to them just as strongly as a similar price appeals to white people.”²⁷¹

Despite this promise, the *Journal* soon found itself out of favor in the black community. In an editorial appearing near the end of 1916, the *Planet* wrote, “The white press of Richmond has for many years eliminated from its editorial columns all references that would offend the sensibilities or wound the feelings of the better class of our paper.”²⁷² Referring to the *Journal*, however, the editorial noted that it “gladiator-like, rushed to the discussion and in its zeal made the declaration: ‘The whites must rule, the blacks must serve; those protesting can move North to live. Only by the most rigid adherence to the rules of precedence as laid down by the superior race can the latter retain its supremacy.’”²⁷³ In response, the *Planet* quipped that “the despised black folks are making giant strides to overtake and pass those kind of white people, who gulp down these egotistic words like a sweet morsel” and concluded that “what we intended to say is that the Richmond *Evening Journal* wounded the feelings of the colored people of this community deeply, and the feeling of resentment is in evidence from one section of this city to the other.”²⁷⁴

Writing on the passage of the Nineteenth amendment, which went into effect when Tennessee ratified the amendment in 1920, the *Planet* wrote that “officially speaking,” Tennessee’s actions gave the vote “to all women, black and white, rich and poor” but also noted that “the cry that many millions of colored women would be enfranchised alongside of the white ones was used to defeat the ratification of the Amendment.”²⁷⁵ The reply “was that this new alleged menace would be controlled in the same mode and manner that the voting of colored men had been controlled.”²⁷⁶ A month later, the paper reported: “The long lines of men, who vainly attempted to vote at the Jackson Ward precincts in years gone by have been changed to long lines

of women attempting to register in order to exercise the right of franchise.”²⁷⁷ It went on to note the exemplary work of Maggie Walker and Ora Stokes in encouraging black women to vote and to work together for the betterment of the race. However, black women often ran into the same disfranchising wall that kept men from the polls.

When suffrage did come via the federal amendment in 1920, the *Times-Dispatch* congratulated women on their enfranchisement while maintaining their stout opposition to enfranchisement via a federal amendment which it “does not now believe it was the proper or desirable method.”²⁷⁸ It further brought up the issue of race, announcing that the ballot box faced further endangerment that every Southerner understood, but “a similar problem was boldly faced and boldly solved in the days following the Civil War. White supremacy was regained and maintained, and while conditions at times became vexatious, there need be no fear of any other than Anglo-Saxon domination.”²⁷⁹ Until the end, white supremacy and its maintenance never faltered from a position near the very center of the suffrage discourses. Even after the vote came, some maintained that only a small number of white women wanted the vote because “the majority of Southern women, God bless them, have the birth, the breeding, and the standing and too much self-respect to mix up in politics, and become unwomanly.”²⁸⁰ In a letter from William L. Marbury in 1920, he wrote that black women “would actually vote, just as every single one of the negro men over twenty-one years old in [Maryland] vote, and will continue to vote, so far as we can see, so long as the fifteenth amendment remains in force.” He further feared that if Tennessee ratified the amendment, “negro woman suffrage would be imposed upon us, perhaps forever.”²⁸¹ Not only did such arguments oppose woman suffrage, but

they also opposed and sometimes called for the repeal of the Fifteenth amendment by which black men had, by law though not in reality, been enfranchised.

After the passage of the Nineteenth amendment, the activism of black women did not dissipate. To combat any further attempts at disfranchisement, *The Crisis*, after reasoning that Southerners would “marshal every black Judas and traitor to advise us to remain slaves,” declared that “if by force and fraud a new disfranchisement is fastened on the South,” everyone must be willing “to publish the facts to the civilized world, to choke the court with case upon case, to appeal, agitate, and protest.”²⁸² In 1921, Ella Murray reported on “colored women standing silently at the doors of the conventions of their careless white sisters, with banners inscribed perhaps with some such thought as: Do you know that so many million women are denied the vote?”²⁸³ As had been maintained by suffrage supporters throughout, white Virginians applied the tactics created to deny black men the vote to women with unfortunate success within a short period after the passage of the Nineteenth amendment.

CONCLUSION

The rhetoric of the suffrage debates in Richmond reveals varying attitudes among both the suffragists and the antisuffragists. While both sides subscribed to the normative gender ideology of the day, they used that ideology to argue for very different goals. Suffragists used women's widely acknowledged rights and duties within the home to argue that they needed to vote in order to protect their families, and they particularly promoted the importance of women voting on temperance and child labor issues. Other women, however, who worked outside of the home, pressed for the vote as a way to protect themselves from their employers. The antisuffragists, who also exalted women's role within the home and the family, contended that women's highest duty was to attend to their domestic sphere and that any involvement in the political world would force them to subordinate, if not to entirely abandon, their chief concerns in the home.

Throughout the suffrage debates in Richmond, racial issues, particularly white supremacy, saturated the issue of women's attaining the vote. Antisuffragists warned that a woman suffrage amendment would send torrents of black women to the polls while the white women stayed home. They further reasoned that extending the ballot to women would reopen the issue of the black male vote, which Virginia had successfully denied most black men since the rewriting of its constitution in 1902. Suffragists countered these arguments by suggesting that woman suffrage would only further bolster white supremacy since white women outnumbered the entire black population, male and female, in Virginia. Furthermore, they argued that the same constitutional constraints placed upon black men would simply be extended to black

antisuffragists invoked racist rhetoric for their respective causes. Ultimately, we can better understand why woman suffrage never succeeded in Virginia and why the state legislators did not ratify the federal amendment.

END NOTES

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- ¹ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 19 January 1915.
- ² Elna C. Green, *Southern Strategies* (Chapel Hill: University of Chapel Hill Press, 1997), 58; and Jane J. Camhi, *Women Against Women* (Brooklyn: Carlson Publishing, 1994), 5.
- ³ Susan E. Marshall, *Splintered Sisterhood* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), 11.
- ⁴ Marjorie S. Wheeler, "The Woman Suffrage Movement in the Inhospitable South," in *Votes for Women!*, ed. Marjorie S. Wheeler (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1995).
- ⁵ Aileen Kraditor, *The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement, 1890-1920* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), 14.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, 65.
- ⁷ Suzanne Lebsack, "Woman Suffrage and White Supremacy: A Virginia Case Study," in *Visible Women: New Essays on American Activism*, eds. Nancy A. Hewitt and Suzanne Lebsack (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 77.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, 77.
- ⁹ *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, 7 October 1916.
- ¹⁰ Ann Gordon, "Woman Suffrage (Not Universal Suffrage) by Federal Amendment," in *Votes for Women!*, ed. Marjorie Wheeler (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1995), 4.
- ¹¹ Gordon, 19.
- ¹² Gordon, 19-21.
- ¹³ Elsa Barkley Brown, "To Catch the Vision of Freedom," in *African American Women and the Vote*, Ann Gordon, ed., 120.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 135.
- ¹⁵ Anastasia Sims in Wheeler, *Votes for Women!*, 152.
- ¹⁶ Green, xii-xiii.
- ¹⁷ Green, 166.
- ¹⁸ Green, xii.
- ¹⁹ Wheeler, 39.
- ²⁰ Eleanor Flexner, *Century of Struggle* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), 288.
- ²¹ Sara Graham, *Woman Suffrage and the New Democracy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 13.
- ²² Anastatia Sims, "Beyond the Ballot: The Radical Vision of the Antisuffragists" in *Votes for Women*, 106.
- ²³ Marshall, xi.
- ²⁴ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 10 April 1910, sec. C, p. 4.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*
- ²⁶ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 29 November 1909.
- ²⁷ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 16 April 1910.
- ²⁸ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 16 April 1910.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*
- ³⁰ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 30 March 1912.
- ³¹ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 9 May 1914.
- ³² *Ibid.*
- ³³ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 20 June 1914.
- ³⁴ As an issue of race, this incident will be discussed in further detail at a later point.
- ³⁵ Papers of the Equal Suffrage League (ESL) of Virginia, 24 July 1914.
- ³⁶ ESL Papers, 24 July 1914.
- ³⁷ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 14 October 1911.
- ³⁸ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 18 March 1913.
- ³⁹ *The Richmond Planet*, 18 November 1916.
- ⁴⁰ ESL Papers, 3 January 1914.
- ⁴¹ ESL Papers, 1912.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*
- ⁴³ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 29 March 1914, sec. C, p. 4.

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- ⁴⁴ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 20 March 1914.
- ⁴⁵ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 20 March 1914.
- ⁴⁶ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 9 January 1910, sec. C, p. 2.
- ⁴⁷ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 22 April 1911.
- ⁴⁸ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 14 November 1910.
- ⁴⁹ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 12 February 1912.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁵¹ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 13 January 1914.
- ⁵² *Ibid.*
- ⁵³ Sara Hunter Graham, "Woman Suffrage in Virginia: The Equal Suffrage League and Pressure-Group Politics, 1909-1920," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 101 (April 1993): 49.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 242.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 233.
- ⁵⁶ In 1912, 84 members voted against it with only 12 voting for woman suffrage. Four years later, in 1916, 51 voted against it while 40 favored it.
- ⁵⁷ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 26 January 1916.
- ⁵⁸ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 23 August 1919.
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁰ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 14 July 1919.
- ⁶¹ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 24 August 1920.
- ⁶² Graham, *Woman Suffrage and the New Democracy*, 242.
- ⁶³ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 31 July 1919.
- ⁶⁴ ESL, 1919.
- ⁶⁵ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 11 September 1915.
- ⁶⁶ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 24 October 1915.
- ⁶⁷ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 12 September 1915.
- ⁶⁸ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 26 September 1915.
- ⁶⁹ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 18 April 1919.
- ⁷⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁷¹ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 31 August 1920.
- ⁷² *Ibid.*
- ⁷³ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 28 January 1911.
- ⁷⁴ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 28 January 1911.
- ⁷⁵ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 5 December 1909, sec. C, p. 2.
- ⁷⁶ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 26 February 1912.
- ⁷⁷ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 16 July 1911, sec. A, p. 8.
- ⁷⁸ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 11 May 1912.
- ⁷⁹ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 12 September 1911.
- ⁸⁰ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 3 May 1913.
- ⁸¹ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 13 April 1913.
- ⁸² *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 26 February 1912.
- ⁸³ *Ibid.*
- ⁸⁴ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 1912.
- ⁸⁵ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 28 May 1918.
- ⁸⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁸⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁸⁸ Torrence was a Richmond lawyer who frequently voiced his support for woman suffrage.
- ⁸⁹ ESL Papers, 4 March 1912.
- ⁹⁰ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 16 July 1911, sec. A, p. 8.
- ⁹¹ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 23 July 1911.
- ⁹² *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 20 December 1909.
- ⁹³ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 20 December 1909.
- ⁹⁴ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 23 January 1910, sec. B, p. 4.
- ⁹⁵ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 6 February 1910, sec. B, p. 5.
- ⁹⁶ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 7 August 1915.

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- ⁹⁷ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 5 October 1917.
- ⁹⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁹⁹ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 6 June 1917.
- ¹⁰⁰ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 13 January 1919.
- ¹⁰¹ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 7 August 1919.
- ¹⁰² *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 10 December 1911.
- ¹⁰³ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 16 April 1915.
- ¹⁰⁴ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 20 May 1919.
- ¹⁰⁵ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 17 October 1915.
- ¹⁰⁶ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 17 March 1919.
- ¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁰⁸ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 13 April 1919.
- ¹⁰⁹ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 6 April 1919.
- ¹¹⁰ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 14 May 1919.
- ¹¹¹ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 6 May 1919.
- ¹¹² *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 1 May 1919.
- ¹¹³ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 21 July 1917.
- ¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹⁵ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 8 September 1918.
- ¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹⁸ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 8 August 1919.
- ¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*
- ¹²⁰ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 28 July 1917.
- ¹²¹ *Ibid.*
- ¹²² *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 4 August 1916.
- ¹²³ *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, 7 April 1917.
- ¹²⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹²⁵ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 2 August 1919.
- ¹²⁶ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 2 July 1916.
- ¹²⁷ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 11 April 1919.
- ¹²⁸ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 23 February 1919.
- ¹²⁹ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 14 March 1919.
- ¹³⁰ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 3 August 1919.
- ¹³¹ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 23 October 1919.
- ¹³² *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 1 May 1919.
- ¹³³ See related quote on black women's strike at the American Cigar Company's local stemmery in Norfolk in 1917 in the chapter on race.
- ¹³⁴ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 15 February 1910.
- ¹³⁵ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 4 March 1914.
- ¹³⁶ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 16 January 1915.
- ¹³⁷ *Ibid.*
- ¹³⁸ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 19 January 1915.
- ¹³⁹ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 8 March 1914, sec. C, p. 4.
- ¹⁴⁰ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 9 May 1915.
- ¹⁴¹ Linda Lumsden, *Rampant Women: Suffragists and the Right of Assembly* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1997), 39.
- ¹⁴² *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 3 December 1911, sec. C, p. 4.
- ¹⁴³ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 22 March 1912.
- ¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴⁵ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 1 February 1916.
- ¹⁴⁶ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 13 October 1915.
- ¹⁴⁷ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 6 December 1915.
- ¹⁴⁸ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 10 December 1915.
- ¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

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- ¹⁵⁰ ESL, 1916.
¹⁵¹ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 23 August 1915.
¹⁵² *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 1 February 1916.
¹⁵³ *Ibid.*
¹⁵⁴ ESL.
¹⁵⁵ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 2 July 1917.
¹⁵⁶ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 8 January 1918.
¹⁵⁷ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 5 October 1917.
¹⁵⁸ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 25 May 1915.
¹⁵⁹ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 12 December 1915.
¹⁶⁰ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 3 September 1919.
¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*
¹⁶² *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 21 November 1919.
¹⁶³ W.E.B. DuBois, "Woman Suffrage" in *The Crisis*, November 1915, 298.
¹⁶⁴ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 10 December 1913.
¹⁶⁵ ESL Papers, nd.
¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*
¹⁶⁷ ESL Papers, 1913.
¹⁶⁸ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 8 November 1910.
¹⁶⁹ Carrie Catt and Nettie Shuler, *Woman Suffrage and Politics: The Inner Story of the Suffrage Movement* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926), 483.
¹⁷⁰ ESL Papers, 1913.
¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*
¹⁷² *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 30 November 1909.
¹⁷³ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 14 January 1915.
¹⁷⁴ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 11 November 1917.
¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*
¹⁷⁶ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 16 February 1917.
¹⁷⁷ Graham, 242-246.
¹⁷⁸ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 16 May 1919.
¹⁷⁹ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 7 June 1919.
¹⁸⁰ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 8 June 1919.
¹⁸¹ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 6 June 1919.
¹⁸² *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 18 July 1920.
¹⁸³ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 30 August 1919.
¹⁸⁴ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 16 September 1918.
¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*
¹⁸⁶ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 3 February 1919.
¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*
¹⁸⁸ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 8 February 1918.
¹⁸⁹ ESL Papers, 30 July 1913.
¹⁹⁰ ESL Papers, 30 July 1913.
¹⁹¹ *Chicago Defender*, 12 October 1918.
¹⁹² ESL Papers, 1914.
¹⁹³ *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, 29 July 1922.
¹⁹⁴ Lebsack, 66.
¹⁹⁵ Ida Harper, ed. *History of Woman Suffrage* (Rochester, NY: Charles Mann, 1889), vol. 5, 59.
¹⁹⁶ Lumsden, xxvii.
¹⁹⁷ Green, 166.
¹⁹⁸ Wheeler, *New Women of the new South*, 20.
¹⁹⁹ Lumsden, 17.
²⁰⁰ Ann Gordon, ed. *African American Women and the Vote, 1837-1965*, 18.
²⁰¹ *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, 29 September 1917.
²⁰² Brown, 128.
²⁰³ Green, 160.

- ²⁰⁴ Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 1.
- ²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.
- ²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.
- ²⁰⁷ *Richmond Planet*, 29 January 1916.
- ²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*
- ²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 10, 13.
- ²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 145.
- ²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 16.
- ²¹² *Ibid.*
- ²¹³ Green, 97.
- ²¹⁴ Wheeler, *New Women of the New South*, 18.
- ²¹⁵ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 16 August 1918.
- ²¹⁶ *Ibid.*
- ²¹⁷ *Ibid.*
- ²¹⁸ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 18 June 1919.
- ²¹⁹ *Ibid.*
- ²²⁰ Wheeler, *New Women of the New South*, 128.
- ²²¹ ESL, nd.
- ²²² ESL, nd.
- ²²³ ESL, nd.
- ²²⁴ ESL, Kate Gordon, 13 May 1915.
- ²²⁵ ESL, nd.
- ²²⁶ ESL, nd.
- ²²⁷ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 27 August 1915.
- ²²⁸ ESL, January 1920.
- ²²⁹ ESL, 10 April 1915.
- ²³⁰ ESL, Davis Reed, 2 January 1914.
- ²³¹ ESL, Hugh Stockdell, 19 July 1917.
- ²³² ESL, 1919.
- ²³³ ESL, nd.
- ²³⁴ Graham, 246.
- ²³⁵ *Richmond Evening Journal*, 4 May 1915.
- ²³⁶ *Ibid.*
- ²³⁷ Congressional Record, 1918.
- ²³⁸ *Ibid.*
- ²³⁹ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 7 August 1915.
- ²⁴⁰ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 23 June 1915.
- ²⁴¹ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 15 February 1917.
- ²⁴² *Ibid.*
- ²⁴³ Brown, 148.
- ²⁴⁴ David Lewis, ed. *W.E.B. DuBois: A Reader* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1995), 304.
- ²⁴⁵ *Richmond Planet*, 5 January 1918.
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- ²⁴⁸ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 30 July 1919.
- ²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*
- ²⁵⁰ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 18 November 1919.
- ²⁵¹ Mary Church Terrell, "The Justice of Woman Suffrage," *The Crisis* 4 (September 1912): 243.
- ²⁵² *The Crisis* 4 (September 1912): 234.
- ²⁵³ W.E.B. DuBois, "Why the South is 'In the Saddle,'" *Richmond Planet*, 4 November 1916.
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