

National American Woman Suffrage Association

MEMBER NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN

Honorary President, SUSAN B. ANTHONY, 17 Madison Street, Rochester, N. Y.

President, REV. ANNA HOWARD SHAW,
7443 Devon Street, Mt. Airy, Philadelphia, Pa.

Vice President at Large, FLORENCE KELLEY,
105 East 22nd Street, New York City.

Corresponding Secretary, KATE M. GORDON,
1800 Prytania Street, New Orleans, La.

Recording Secretary, ALICE STONE BLACKWELL, 3 Park Street, Boston, Mass
Treasurer, HARRIET TAYLOR UPTON, Warren, Ohio.

Auditors: { LAURA CLAY, Lexington, Ky.
DR. ANNICE JEFFREY MYERS, 375 East 12th St., N., Portland, Ore.

Chairman Press Committee, ELNORA M. BABCOCK, Dunkirk, N. Y.

OFFICE OF
THE CORRESPONDING SECRETARY

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS, WARREN, OHIO



October 7th, 1907.

Mrs. Desha Breckenridge,
337 Linden Walk,
Lexington, Ky.

My dear Mrs. Breckenridge:-

I have been desperately ill since my return to New Orleans, and have not taken any further steps in regard to launching our woman's edition. From the present situation it looks as though we will have to postpone its appearance. The only object in settling upon Miss Anthony's birthday was to create thereby a certain kind of sentiment which would be of service, but since your calling my attention to the fact that the 15th falls on Saturday, I think we would have to change the date at any rate, as in most places they could not handle a Saturday and a Sunday edition, and we wish it to appear on a week day when the women can sell the papers in leading stores, business houses and exchanges, etc.

I agree with you thoroughly that Louisville would be the better place to launch such a paper, and I will immediately write to Miss Laura Clay and find out the result of her interview with ^W Miss Roark. I doubt not she has hesitated to write knowing how seriously ill I have been.

I feel very confident that if the movement was launched for the benefit of the school effort that it could be made a great financial success, and serve the cause of suffrage through the tremendous opportunity offered for our propoganda reaching all sorts and conditions of people. As soon as I hear from Miss Clay, I will again communicate with you.

Cordially yours,

Kate M. Gordon

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NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS, WARREN, OHIO

October 7th, 1907.



Miss Laura Clay,
Lexington, Ky.

My dear Miss Clay:-

I am going to enclose Mrs. Breckenridge's letter received on Saturday. I will also enclose the carbon copy of my letter to her, so that you will fully understand the situation.

Now what I want to know is what has been the result of your interview with ^{is} Miss Roark. Is she willing to launch the effort in the interest ^{of the} for a school movement?

I think it will necessary for us to postpone the appearance of the paper. The fact that the 15th of February is so near ^{Sunday} will make it necessary for us to make a change, and the only advantage for it to appear on the 15th was to gain the added sentiment which Miss Anthony's birthday might lend to the movement.

I am anxiously awaiting news from Miss Kearney.

Very cordially yours,

Kate M. Gordon

Oct. 8th, 1907.

Dear Miss Gordon,

I took my long letter of this date to the post-office, and took out a letter from Mr. Blackwell, enclosing one from Miss Blackwell, which I enclose to you. While he sends your letter to him, still I do not gather from it what you would like me to do about Presidential suffrage. Personally, I believe it would be a good thing, and I would be willing to help Miss Kearney to try for it; but as I said in my letter of today, I do not wish to do anything which will in any way militate against the experiment you wish to make.

Cordially yours,

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NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS, WARREN, OHIO

October 1, 1907.



My dear Miss Clay:-

I have been very, very ill or I would have immediately replied to your letter in regard to the employment of Miss Kearney in Mississippi. \$1,000 seems an awful price to pay, but she is very extravagant, and I do not know whether there is any justification for placing such a valuation upon her services.

However, I ^{and} ~~will~~ be willing to pay it, and to contribute \$100 also, if she would leave out the presidential suffrage scheme, which I think rank nonsense, and go to work on the regular suffrage plan to secure the suffrage for the white women of the State of Mississippi. I enclose her letter which she asked for you to see.

I would say nothing to the other Officers about Mr. Blackwell's interest in it, because I find the mere mention of the name Blackwell is enough to raise objections in the minds of either Miss Shaw or Mrs. Avery.

I will write to Miss Kearney and ask her if she would be willing to drop the presidential suffrage ^{plan} ~~thing~~, and work it on the regular suffrage lines. If she is willing to do this, then I will go to work and see what influence I can bring to bear upon our Board.

Very cordially yours,

Kate M. Gordon

Oct 25, 1907

COPY OF LETTER OF OCTOBER 15th, FROM MISS GORDON.

My dear Miss Shaw:-

I have been in correspondence with Miss Kearney in regard to the situation in Mississippi. There seems to be a very strong impression among the Mississippi women that the time is ripe to crystalize sentiment on our question. In the recent senatorial campaign there, Vardaman repeatedly committed himself to woman suffrage. I am in receipt of Noel's platform, the man who has received the primary nomination for governorship, which virtually means his election, and he comes out flat-footed for woman suffrage.

Now Mr. Blackwell was urging Miss Kearney to make the demand in the Legislature for presidential suffrage unqualified by the word white. When I was appealed to I expressed, as I have repeatedly expressed, that I not only considered presidential suffrage unadvisable, but with the poll tax qualification in the State, utterly ridiculous, and calculated to do us more harm than it ever could good, and that we were building up a nice boomerang for the future of the work. I further said that to attempt any campaign in the South without qualifying the word white would simply mean to reopen the negro question, and give great loop holes for demagogues to identify the suffrage movement with the old abolition movement, which in many minds, fool as it may seem, the connection still exists. It seems now that both Mrs. Kells and Mrs. Thompson, who are Miss Kearney's main advisers, agree that if any campaign is to be conducted, it must be conducted on the basis of demanding full suffrage in the name of the white women.

Miss Kearney is willing to go to Mississippi, remain hard at work for the amount of money that she is engaged for in Nebraska, February, March and April, I believe, for \$1,000. Upon appeal from Mr. Blackwell she said she would leave Canada, go down to Mississippi for the month of December and the first half of January, stop with a friend in Jackson, and work with the members of the Legislature for \$200.

Oct 25, 1907

-2-

Now is a campaign for suffrage is conducted in Mississippi, Miss Clay, Mr. Bäckwell and I will each give \$100. I will also volunteer some of my time to the campaign, and what I want to know is what the National will do towards the campaign. I have written Miss Kearney that I considered her piece a top notch one, and that I would expect Mississippi to have to raise quite a large part of it. Would the same offer hold in Mississippi that you make to other States, that you would give an equal amount to that raised by the State? For instance, if the State raised \$300, the National would give \$300. Would the word white affect at all the National contribution? This, of course, is an important point, because if it does, then I do not think the Southern States ought to be asked to contribute at all to the National finances. While I realize thoroughly that Louisiana and Kentucky are the two States that contribute in all emergencies, measured by the strength of their organization, they have contributed more liberally than many of the State organizations that have had pretty generous assistance. Will you kindly put out a vote and see what amount of money the Business Committee would vote for Mississippi? I feel sure that if we can get the agitation started in Mississippi, it will be the beginning of the end of the suffrage question in the South.

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NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS, WARREN, OHIO

October 11th, 1907



My dear Miss Clay:-

I may be wrong in the attitude I take towards presidential suffrage in the South, but I have opposed it, and still continue to oppose it, because I consider under present conditions that it is an absolutely useless concession. To begin with, in almost all the Southern States there is a \$2.00 poll tax which is essential to vote. Now, as enthusiastic as I am on the right of suffrage to women, I question very much whether I would be willing to pay an annual \$2.00 poll tax for the privilege of voting on a foregone conclusion, as far as the presidency is concerned.

I am absolutely opposed to the Suffrage Association opening the question of suffrage upon anything else but a white basis. Lord knows we had enough trouble to exclude the negro man from voting in the States where it really amounts to an issue, and the only hope I see in the near future for gaining suffrage in the South will be that through the white woman's vote we can establish an honest white supremacy, and get rid of the fraudulent conditions which lend a permanency to so many of the corrupt conditions still surrounding our Southern political right to vote.

I have written to Miss Kearney that I was not willing to move a hand's turn towards the success of a campaign in Mississippi along presidential lines, and I would absolutely condemn the whole thing unless it includes the word white in it.

I see through the whole of Mr. Blackwell's letter the old abolition sentiment. He thinks he is very generous and fair on

#2

[Oct 11, 1907]

this proposition, but he absolutely cannot be so. My idea in favoring paying \$1,000 to Miss Kearney was that I felt that Mississippi could be made to raise some of this money. With your \$100, Mr. Blackwell's \$100, and mine that I was willing to put up, and with an equal amount raised from Mississippi, I thought \$400 from the National might be secured.

I do not agree with Mr. Blackwell that a defeat in Mississippi would set back the whole thing twenty years. I believe by launching a campaign against miscegenation, and claiming that the power to assert authority must be given to the white women of the State for the moral protection of the youths of our State, would make a tremendous ^{ly} strong campaign, and I am watching my opportunity to launch it in the most effective way I can. It may be that I will open the whole question through a resolution in the Era Club, after having seen the Times Democrat and asked for their support.

I am waiting for news from Miss Kearney. I will let you know at once what her attitude of mind is upon the qualification white in her demand before the Legislature of Mississippi, whether for full or presidential suffrage. I regard it as a calamity if the they do not insert the word white, if such a campaign is conducted.

Very cordially yours,

Walter M. Gordon

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First Vice President, Rachel Foster Avery, Swarthmore, Pa.
Second Vice President, Florence Kelley,
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NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
Warren, Ohio



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Auditors: { Laura Clay, Lexington, Ky.
Mary Simpson Sperry,
2100 Pacific Avenue, San Francisco, Cal.

OFFICE OF CORRESPONDING SECRETARY
New Orleans, La.

October 1, 1907.

Mr. Henry Blackwell,
3 Park Street,
Boston, Mass.

My dear Mr. Blackwell:-

I have been very seriously ill, else your letter would have been immediately answered. I am even yet too ill to do any serious work, but the urgency of the situation makes me write to you and to Miss Kearney relative to the Mississippi situation.

Now, personally, you know my opinion of presidential suffrage in the South. I not only regard it as a useless scheme, but as a baneful concession, and I have considered it from every point of view. I would not give ten cents towards securing presidential suffrage, so you know how much I care, one way or another, about Miss Kearney doing work on that line.

However, I feel very differently about working to secure full suffrage for the white women of the State of Mississippi, and I enclose for your consideration a point of view upon which I have *had* the opinion of some very eminent lawyers in the South, who have declared that the white women of the South could be enfranchised without the Negroes.

Now if Miss Kearney will undertake to campaign in Mississippi for full suffrage for the white women in Mississippi, I will not only do all I can to help along that line, but I will also contribute \$100 towards it, and use my influence with the Business Committee to contribute a certain amount.

But if it is simply to do a campaign for presidential suffrage, then I cannot conscientiously do anything with the

#2

Oct 1, 1907

Business Committee in influencing them.

Personally, I think Miss Kearney's price outrageous, and I doubt very much whether she is going to get \$1,000 from Nebraska; still, there is no way of proving it, and there is no use in rousing the question. It seems to me she shows very little suffrage feeling not to be willing to make somewhat of a sacrifice in behalf of her State.

Now the whole thing in a nut-shell is that I will not only contribute financially, but I will donate my time to the work in Mississippi, and use my influence with the Board for a contribution towards the State campaign, provided the demand is made for suffrage for the white women of the State of Mississippi. If it is simply for a presidential suffrage grant, then I do not want to have anything to do with it, because, as I said before, it is a boomerang I do not care to fool with.

Very cordially yours,

Kate M. Gordon

Kate McGordon
M. O. Legus
La
Rec Oct 5/1907

Richmond, Ky.

Oct. 8th, 1907.

My dear Miss Gordon,

I was so sorry to hear of your serious and painful attack of tonsillitis; and I trust you are now entirely relieved from pain, though I know it must be some time before you fully recover your strength.

When I heard from Miss Jean that you could not at once attend to Mr. Blackwell's letter about Miss Kearney, I felt that I would have to answer him myself more fully than I did in the previous letter of which I sent you a copy. Therefore I wrote a letter, of which I now enclose a copy to you. I present in it the reason why I think Presidential suffrage at this time might form an entering wedge to your plan to ask for white women suffrage alone. I also suggest a means whereby we might obtain the best results of Miss Kearney's efforts without an inordinate expense. I am surprised that you should think that under any circumstances we could afford to employ Miss Kearney for three months at \$1000, to work in the Legislature, ~~since the Legislature is not authorized~~ for full suffrage for women, white or black, since the Legislature could do nothing except submit a constitutional amendment for that, which would have to be followed by an expensive campaign. The presidential suffrage has the advantage of being within the gift of the Legislature itself; and would probably be just as good a test of the constitutionality of extending suffrage to white women only as a full suffrage amendment would be.

I have had an answer from Mr. Blackwell to this letter, which I have not yet answered. I would like to see the effort made to get presidential suffrage; but I am resolved not to do anything which may in any way militate against the success of your proposed plan to try for white suffrage. I have not, you will observe, said anything to Mr. Blackwell about your plan, as I am leaving that to you to do at your discretion. But I

did suggest the advisability of asking for suffrage for whites alone. In his answer he says Miss Kearney would be willing to do the work I suggest for about two hundred dollars; that she was willing to ask for white women alone, but thought that under the present laws for disfranchising negro men, leaving out negro women would not strengthen the bill even in Mississippi.

I cannot delay very long an answer to this last letter from Mr. Blackwell; but when I do answer it, I wish to do so in such a manner that it will not in any way interfere with the co-operation I promised you in your more extensive plan. Therefore, please write me at your earliest possible moment what position you would like for me to take about the work in Mississippi. I took pains not to commit myself except on the condition that suffrage was asked for white women alone; and that by my plan, work could be stopped at once, if no encouragement was given before the Legislature met.

I have received your letter to state presidents; but cannot undertake to answer it now, or probably not before our state convention, which I expect to come off Nov. 14th and 15th.

Mrs. Roark was to have met with the officers of the State Fed. of Women's Clubs last Wednesday, at which time she would have asked their help in getting a Louisville newspaper for our Memorial edition. Unfortunately she could not go to that meeting, and so our prospects are yet undecided. I hope to set something on foot in a few days; but just now I have nothing to report.

Please remember me to your sisters, and believe me

Very cordially yours,

Richmond, Ky.

Nov. 18th, 1907.

My dear Miss Gordon,

Our E.R.A. convention ended on Friday evening. We all feel it was a very successful one. Had 25 new members added. I enclose a program.

Your letter in regard to Hon. Jenkins was read to the convention, and several of the delegates promised to see their Congressmen, as you asked.

Your letter about Miss Blackwell on the Mississippi situation was received; but there were no letters enclosed. However, I have a pretty good general idea of what she would say.

I am in receipt of a letter from Belle Kearney, inviting me to the conference with her Ex. Committee, at Jackson Miss., on Thursday, Nov. 28th. I have just written to say I would come; but I declined her further request to help them during the winter with their Legislature, as I feel that women only from Mississippi and states where similar political conditions exist will be of any real use with Mississippi politicians. I think it will be eminently useful to them to have you; but as for myself, I shall be more useful to the cause at home. Miss Kearney writes that she was sending off an invitation to you to be present at the conference on the 28th, and I am depending upon your being there. Please try to get an answer from McElway in time for the conference. Write to me that you are coming. You will not have half the distance to come as I, and I should feel that much of the usefulness of my going would be lost if you are not there. Do write what you will do.

Regards to your sisters.

Very cordially yours,

P.S. Your letter returning the five dollars borrowed was received.

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OFFICE OF
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NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS, WARREN, OHIO

November 12th, 1907.



Miss Laura Clay,
189 Mill Street,
Lexington, Ky.

My dear Miss Clay:-

I am returning the enclosed letters. Alice Blackwell is certainly worked up over any effort that may keep the black ladies out of their rights. We white ones can remain forever disfranchised so long as these ladies are not discriminated against. If I did not feel such warm affection and regard for her, I would take up the cudgels with her in defense of my point of view, but I do not think it worth while.

I have read McElway's article, and it is exactly what I have contended. I will write to him in the next day or two.

I have been very, very busy. What with the paper, the National work and local work, I have not much more than breathing time for any side issues.

Hope your Convention has been an unqualified success.

Cordially yours,

Kate M. Gordon

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NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS, WARREN, OHIO

December 14th, 1907



My dear Miss Clay:-

I was very glad to receive your letter, and to read Mrs. McCulloch's opinion of my contention in regard to the 15th Amendment. It is really flattering to see how, in every instance, the lawyers consider the point well taken, and urge me to try and get the States to submit it as the only test of its constitutional strength.

I have another bee buzzing in regard to that 15th Amendment, and if the States will not submit by a constitutional amendment, and work for its adoption, I may institute a suit, and see if the 15th Amendment does not specifically enfranchise women.

The Minor-Happersett case was a contention that suffrage was a privilege, and under the 14th Amendment claim^{ed} the privileges and immunities of citizens therein promised. Now the 15th Amendment specifically says " the right to vote of citizens of the United States," and as we have been declared citizens under the 14th Amendment, it seems to me we have a pretty good point right there to agitate. More than this, I would like a test and have it said that this Amendment does not apply to women, and then the rest of the business would be smooth sailing.

Mr. Farrar has promised to give me his opinion on the point, and as he is the most distinguished constitutional lawyer in the South, I am almost wild to get it. However, he is the main counsel for Fish in this Fish-Harriman controversy, and he is now in Chicago and hardly has breathing time at the present moment.

[Dec 14, 1907]

You cannot imagine how difficult it is for me to put my attention on anything else than this constitutional point, and it is rousing considerable interest.

I will enclose in this letter our correspondence with the candidate for the governorship, who endorsed woman suffrage, but fears its conflict with the 14th Amendment.

Many thanks for the check received. I will deposit it, and if it is necessary draw upon it. If the Mississippi women launch their campaign with the word white in it, then I will have to call upon it, but I am solely responsible for paying for the legal form in which my contention is drawn up. I have employed Miss Loeber because I think she is equally capable with men of getting all that is in it out of it, and she is certainly more vitally interested. More than this, she has the splendid counsel of Mr. Denis to consult with, as she is in his office.

I nearly died laughing over the way you expressed Mrs. McCulloch "swallowing the white supremacy dose with pain," but, as you say, she does swallow it loyally. I am going to keep her letter to you for a few days to submit to Miss Loeber. I do not think it will be necessary to have a man lawyer draw up a brief. I would rather have men like Denis, Farrar and Benedict sign it.

I have written to Miss Shaw asking her to get the Business Committee's opinion upon our using some of the Garrett-Thomas Fund to again test some of the constitutional points.

I send on a copy of Mr. Gothwaite's brief. I had to do some hunting for it, hence the delay. I think with you that it would be worth while, as a National Association, to start this kind of work. I would like to see Mrs. McCulloch paid, and well

[Dec 14, 1907]

paid, to investigate what there is in it for us.

I have heard nothing further from Mississippi. A short letter from Mrs. Thompson said that she had been quite ill with tonsillitis. She sent me another communication from that Mrs. Jones to answer. It is a fool article, appealing generally to sex prejudice.

Last night I was at a Parlor Meeting of men and women, and I got the men awfully interested over what a hard proposition women had to secure their enfranchisement. Each one had some plan that he thought would help us. One was for thorough organization. Another thought mandatory proceedings for our rights under the 15th Amendment. Another thought a great man orator would be helpful. But, as a result of all these opinions, one of the men came to me and told me he would give me all the transportation I wanted on the Southern Pacific through the State, for suffrage organization. Now, wasn't that kind?

With cordial regards, I am

Affectionately yours,

Maie M. Gordon.

189 N. Mill St., Lexington, Ky.

Dec. 12th, 1907.

My dear Miss Gordon,

According to promise, I pretty promptly wrote to Mrs. McCulloch, asking her opinion of your constitutional contention. You forgot to provide me with your type-written points, so I had to supply the argument from memory, which I thought mattered little, as I was writing to a woman who would quickly catch the line of argument. I have now received the answer, which is more hopeful than I almost dared to expect. Dear Mrs. McCulloch swallows the white supremacy dose with pain; but you see she does swallow it loyally. I enclose the copy of my letter to her; and her answer. Please return both to me at your convenience. She neglected to enclose the leaflets she mentions; and I am still so upturned in my papers since my occupancy of my flat that I cannot put my hand on the documents. I will try to get them for you later.

You observe that she recommends your getting a formal opinion from a Southern lawyer, just as you had decided to do. I have been waiting for you to say that you were ready for the contribution I promised for the work; but as you will now have an expense on hand, I think it better to send my contribution in this letter. You see by the date of the N.Y. draft, I had it prepared before I went to Jackson.

I was greatly encouraged by your little letter which I received since my return. Not even you can be more eager for news for every turn of event on this question; so do write me whenever you have any thing new bearing on it.

I trust you did not suffer from your exposure in Jackson to tonsillitis.

Please remember me to your sisters, and believe me

Very sincerely your friend,

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OFFICE OF CORRESPONDING SECRETARY
1800 PRYTANIA STREET

NEW ORLEANS, LA. December 5th, 1907.

Miss Laura Clay,
Lexington, Kentucky.

My dear Miss Clay:-

You will be glad to know that I found on my return a letter from Mr. McElway, the burden of which was that he found my letter extremely interesting, and that while he did not have in mind the idea of its application to the extension of white women, that he would certainly consider that the same principles would be applied to my question as well as to his.

I know that you have been very interested to hear his point of view. He mentions, however, that he feels it will be difficult to make partisan politicians see anything that is favorable to woman suffrage, but we know, after our experience in Mississippi, that there are many politicians who, while they would fight to the death the idea of women voting purely on the merits of the question, would gladly welcome us as a measure to insure white supremacy.

My old point of choice between nigger or woman, and glad to take the woman, has more truth than poetry in it.

With cordial regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

P. S. I have an appointment with Miss Loeber for to-morrow morning in regard to our brief, and Mr. Denis, one of the most distinguished lawyers in the State, and for many years Professor of law in Tulane University, will give us his opinion upon it.

(over)

I saw Florence Loeber the
woman lawyer yesterday to
make arrangements for Mr. Davis
opinion & she said she grew
more confident all the time
on the Constitutionality of my
point. My idea is now
to get her to draw up im-
mediately a brief - even if
I have to pay ~~roughly~~ ^{good}
big price for it - then
I will see if I can get
Farrar + Benedict + Davis
& lawyers of that standing
to support my contentions
with their signatures. I
really feel as tho' the
dawn was breaking -
Affectionately
Hale