

# New exhibit featuring League of Women Voters 100th anniversary

ANOKA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY • JANUARY 27, 2019

To commemorate the 100th anniversary of the League of Women Voters and women winning the right to vote, the Anoka County Historical Society will unveil a new exhibit on January 19 from 2-4 p.m. at the History Center.

The opening celebrated not only the centennial, but also the partnership between the League of Women Voters—Anoka, Blaine, Coon Rapids and

ACHS, which produced the research, artifacts, and fabrication of the display. A program led by LWV-ABC members highlighted projects such as “Bee Safe” and “Pollinator Program” as well as the group’s origins at a tea held in 1938.

Once more ahead of the curve, Minnesota LWV became a chapter one year before the National LWV chapter was established, in 2020. This created an environment of perpetual change and progress in which local chapters developed to serve their constituents, even before the vote actually came to pass. In 1911, Anoka resident Dr. Flora Aldrich spoke in favor of women’s suffrage in an article printed in the *Minneapolis Tribune*.

“If it is true—and it is true—that woman’s moral leverage in the home is an all important one, then it is true that

her moral leverage in the government would be an all important one," wrote Aldrich. "Home and government! Their problems are identical; and to give woman a voice in the government is but to enlarge her consecrated services in the home."

Six years later, nationally known suffragist Dr. Effie McCullum James spoke at Library Hall, Anoka. The *Anoka Union* reported that "it was not well attended" but that the address itself was "splendid". It's interesting to note how little the local newspapers covered the suffrage movement and ensuing passage of the 19th Amendment.

World War I challenged ideas of American involvement in the global community and opened employment opportunities for women to replace men in the work force during their deployments. At

the end of the war,  
Grace Randall, an  
organizer in the  
Minnesota Woman  
Suffrage Association,  
visited Anoka to appoint  
a Ratification  
Committee to continue  
advocating for women's  
voting rights. The  
Committee included  
Mrs. A.E. Giddings as  
Chairman, Dr. Flora  
Aldrich and 14 other  
local women, as well as  
one man. In Minnesota,  
March 20, 1919 marks  
the right for women to  
vote in the Presidential  
election, though the  
state would ratify the  
national amendment in  
September. On October  
29, the League of  
Women Voters--  
Minnesota officially  
incorporates.

Nellie Erickson Peterson  
[1866-1948] chaired the  
League of Women  
Voters in Anoka during  
the ratification of the  
19th Amendment. She  
often hosted meetings  
at her home and  
submitted an article to  
the *Anoka Union* on

September 1 on behalf of the League. She doesn't dwell on the win but moves forward into what comes next: preparing to vote in the November Presidential Election.

“It is the hope and belief of the League of Women Voters that the women of our county will respond in the finest spirit of patriotism to this new duty,” wrote Peterson. “It is the personal duty- the special responsibility of every Anoka county woman to take her place at the polls for the good of her home, her state, her country. We believe she will respond....”

This exhibit is part of the “We are 100” project, intended to mark the centennial anniversaries of organizations, businesses, and people in Anoka County. If you have suggestions,

please contact [rebecca@anokacountyhistory.org](mailto:rebecca@anokacountyhistory.org) or 763-421-

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*This article first ran in  
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