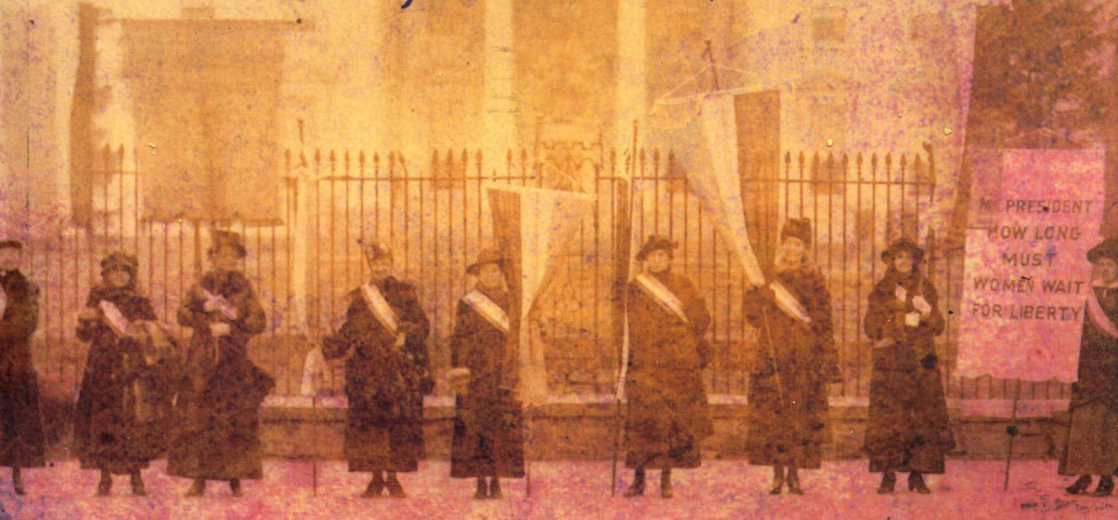


# A WOMAN'S CRUSADE

ALICE PAUL AND THE BATTLE FOR THE BALLOT

MARY WALTON



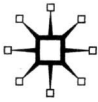
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MARY



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A  
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ALSO BY MARY WALTON  
*The Deming Management Method*  
*For Love of Money*  
*Deming Management at Work*  
*Car: A Drama of the American Workplace*

*To Gene Roberts*

# AUTHOR'S NOTE

Five years ago I was seated at a dinner party next to Gene Roberts, the editor of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* when I was a reporter there in the 1970s and '80s. Roberts is legendary in the newspaper business for his vision and news instincts. Since coauthoring an essay on press and protestors at the White House in 1994, he had been urging writers at loose ends, including myself, to undertake a book about a trailblazing suffragist, a pioneer in nonviolent resistance, who had carried on a David-and-Goliath battle against a president and Congress to win the vote for American women. Her name was Alice Paul and I'd never heard of her. Nor had the others who had rejected the idea. How important could she be?

Roberts is not given to casual chitchat. Hunting for a conversation topic that night, I said, "Tell me about Alice Paul." And for the first time I learned about her in detail. I concluded she was unknown simply because no one had written her story. Before long, I was spooling through reels of microfilm records of her National Woman's Party in the basement of Rutgers University's Alexander Library.

Thanks to an introduction from Alicia Shepard (Thank you, Lisa!), my search for an agent willing to market a book on this seemingly obscure suffragist led me to the doorstep of Gail Ross, who warned me that "women's history doesn't sell." And then she sold it. I am so grateful to have landed with Alessandra Bastagli at Palgrave Macmillan. Her enthusiasm spurred me on, and when the first draft was done, her patient and painstaking editing, so rare these days, and so valuable for a journalist-turned-historian (all those endnotes!), gave shape to the narrative. Copyeditor Jennifer Simington's probing questions brought clarity and structure. Alessandra's helpful and friendly assistant Colleen Lawrie kept me on track and was always available to guide me through the mysteries of photo scans, acquisitions, and Word's track changes feature. Production editor Yasmin Mathew looked after the manuscript in the final stages.

I made one editorial decision along the way that is worth noting here. To preserve historical context, when speaking of African Americans, I use "Negro" and "black," the words employed in the beginning of the twentieth century, with the former by far the most common. "Colored" also appears in quotes from the day. I thank Reverend Gil Caldwell for his counsel on these matters.

Readers will surely find it useful to have a sense of money equivalents. Rather than clutter up the text, I herewith provide a guide, based on calculations by [www.measuringworth.com](http://www.measuringworth.com). According to the Consumer Price Index, in 1909 when Alice was periodically receiving money from her mother for living expenses in Europe, \$100 was worth \$2,441 in 2008 dollars. In 1914, when Alice was paying top organizers \$100 a month, the 2008 value was little changed, at \$2,222. Although a contribution of \$5 might sound like a small amount today, it was actually worth over \$110 that same year, a considerable amount for the typical female with no independent income. By 1917, the value of money had slipped substantially; \$100 was worth the 2008 equivalent of \$1,700. And in 1918, it had slipped even more, to \$1,430.

I am grateful to the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study for a research grant that defrayed expenses for an expedition to Cambridge to read Alice Paul's diary and youthful correspondence, as well as the papers of several other suffragists that are housed in the Institute's Schlesinger Library, where years ago I had once spent many hours as a student at Harvard. How life does circle.

Few family members remain who knew Alice. Her second cousins once removed, Richard Robbins and Calvin Robbins, shared youthful memories of a serious but welcoming middle-aged woman with a cloud of dark hair, who often attended family gatherings and teared up at family funerals. Richard, a retired librarian and former copyeditor, read every word of the manuscript and saved me from countless errors. Letha Mae Glover, Christopher Henson, and Carol Mullin helped provide a picture of Alice in old age.

The search for information on two of Alice's top lieutenants led me to two helpful keepers of the flame, Dora Lewis's great granddaughter, Dora Townsend, and Lucy Burns's great niece, Janet Burns Campbell.

Paulsdale, the Paul family's "Home Farm" in Mt. Laurel, New Jersey, where Alice grew up, is today the Alice Paul Institute, operated by a group of admirable women who lent a hand to this project every step of the way. Program Director Lucienne Beard and Director Rhonda DiMascio were on board from the beginning. Lucy pointed me in many helpful directions and became a good friend.



Kris Myers generously shared her knowledge of suffrage history. Valerie Buickerood and Dana Dabek-Milstein added their encouragement. No one was too busy to help me run the copier.

Jennifer Krafchik, director of collections for the Sewall-Belmont House & Museum in Washington, D.C., the final headquarters of the National Woman's Party, unpacked the beautiful old banners, opened up photo archives, and provided scans. After Jennifer left on maternity leave, interpretation and education manager Abigail Newkirk took over and was just as helpful.

Christopher Densmore, curator of the Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College, steered me to relevant materials and took the trouble to find the text of Alice Paul's Ivy Ode, delivered at her graduation, when I couldn't. Dona Laughlin, alumni director of Packer Collegiate Institute, allowed me to research the school archives on Lucy Burns and her sisters and then helped locate Janet Burns Campbell. At the Moorestown Friends School, Beth Stouffer shared materials on the Paul family and the school in Alice's day.

I am indebted for insights and encouragement to the people who read all or portions of the drafts: Peggy Anderson, Lucienne Beard, Kelly Dilworth, Bill Eddins, Emma Edmunds, Antonella Iannarino, Laura Nathanson, Mike Shoup, and Gene Roberts. My husband and live-in editor, Charles Layton, cheerfully read every word at least once and usually twice or more. His interest never faltered. I could not have done this without him.

As the guardian of my offsite auxiliary hard drive, Joyce Klein put up with my constant interruptions to retrieve it for updating. Robert P. J. Cooney Jr., author of the beautiful illustrated history *Winning the Vote*, helped demystify the world of suffrage photo archives and found the best photos first. And all the following people answered questions, provided information and services, and extended comradely help: Joe Adler, Jofie Adler, Bill Barry, Alicia Belmas, John and Rose Boland, Perdita Buchan, Kevin Chambers, Dante Cosentino, M. J. Crowley, Sally Downey, Don Drake, Paul Dunlap, David Gerber, Sarah Heuges, Tina Heuges, Molly Hindman, Erik Landsberg, David Layton, Rebecca Layton, Diane McKernan, Christine McLaughlin, Patsy McLaughlin, Geanna Merola, Connie Ogden, Helen Pike, Donald A. Ritchie, Janice E. Ruth, Andrew Stromberg, and David Walls.

Mary Walton  
February 1, 2010



*Alice Paul. Courtesy of the Historic National Woman's Party, Sewall-Belmont House and Museum, Washington, D.C.*

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# PROLOGUE

In 1848 when Elizabeth Cady Stanton and her friends organized a woman's rights convention in Seneca Falls, New York, a married woman could not own property. She could not sue or be sued, make a contract or a will, or operate a business in her own name. If she worked, her wages belonged to her husband. In the event of a divorce, the father had custody of their children. Without the money to pay for a private education, a woman who aspired to college was largely out of luck, since the doors of most public universities were closed to her. In no state could she vote, except as a school board member here, a municipal officer there. In the words of the convention's "Declaration of Sentiments," she was "civilly dead."<sup>1</sup>

As the child of a lawyer, Stanton often heard stories of the way discriminatory laws denied married women rights to property and children. When her only brother died, her father's remark cut her to the quick: "Oh my daughter, I wish you were a boy!"<sup>2</sup> In 1850, Stanton met Susan B. Anthony, a Quaker school teacher turned temperance crusader, and the two formed a lifelong partnership in pursuit of equal rights for women.

Led by this remarkable pair, the nineteenth-century women's movement succeeded in eliminating numerous legal barriers to equality. By 1902, when the National American Woman Suffrage Association conducted a survey, a wife could own property in three-quarters of the states and in two-thirds she could keep her paycheck. The doors to most public universities had swung open. The holdouts were largely in the South, a bastion of prejudice against women. In Georgia, husbands no longer had the right to whip their wives, but the state university was one of just four (all in the South) that didn't admit women.

In Alabama, women could not practice law or medicine or serve as ministers. In Louisiana, with the exception of mothers and grandmothers, women, classed with idiots and lunatics, could not be appointed guardians.

Despite advances in family law, in all but nine states and the District of Columbia a father still had sole custody and control of minor children. In almost no state could women be notary publics. And juries with women were rare.<sup>3</sup>

When Anthony died in 1906, four years after Stanton, women had won the ballot in just four states: Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, and Idaho. Because she could not vote, a woman had no voice in the heated national conversation kindled by progressive reforms. Trusts were being busted, tenements cleaned up, political machines ripped apart. But men controlled the agenda. Women had no leverage over elected officials or those who aspired to office.

Voting, it was argued, would distract women from their sacred domestic roles. They would indulge in politics to the exclusion of motherhood and wifely duties. "You are the queens of the domestic kingdom," warned Cardinal James Gibbons of Baltimore, speaking for the Catholic establishment. "Do not stain your garments with the soil of the political arena."<sup>4</sup> Women were said to be uninformed and too emotional to make considered judgments, particularly at a certain time of the month.

In 1908, the *New York Times* polled eight U.S. senators, twenty-two U.S. representatives, and thirty-five college and university presidents on the issue of women's suffrage. Forty-nine percent were in favor, 28 percent were opposed, and the remaining 23 percent were either noncommittal or favored limiting the vote. Highly educated men were less likely than lawmakers to approve of women voting. Eleven of the presidents waffled, delivering so many pros and cons they could not be categorized. Only 14 percent of those polled were squarely in favor of votes for women.<sup>5</sup>

Alston Ellis of Ohio University maintained that, contrary to popular belief, females were no more moral than men. Enfranchising Colorado women had failed in his observation to "purify" politics in the way some had predicted. Worse, "Women, under the recent order of things, are becoming too mannish." Frederick W. Hamilton of Tufts College said the majority of women "do not want the ballot, and probably would not use it if they could." The *Times* concurred, snidely. "While it is not a fact that no American women take an interest in politics, the vast majority never give the subject anything deserving the name of thought."<sup>6</sup>

For southerners obsessed with preventing enfranchised black males from voting, the potential addition of millions of black females to the electorate was a nightmare; moreover, black women were thought to be less easily intimidated

than black men. Also hostile were the bosses of the corrupt political machines, who feared that female voters would resist manipulation and favor reform. Manufacturing interests thought it likely that females armed with ballots would battle on behalf of women workers. Protectors of the status quo—the wealthy stakeholders in oil, mining, and the railroads—quietly prodded influential lawmakers to take anti-suffrage stands.<sup>7</sup>

Above all, a powerful liquor establishment stuffed the pockets of politicians with cash and advertised heavily in state after state when the issue arose, certain that the distaff half of the species would overwhelmingly favor prohibition. The malt liquor industry successfully warded off suffrage in a 1912 Wisconsin referendum, convincing voters—all men, of course—that voting women not only would seek to deprive imbibers of a pleasurable birthright, but would also jeopardize the state's economy. Manufacturers and purveyors would suffer, as well as coopers, bottle and cork makers, and the farmers who grew barley and corn.

When convenient, and it was always convenient, the opponents of suffrage hid behind the doctrine of states' rights, which is based on the Tenth Amendment stipulation that those powers not explicitly granted in the U.S. Constitution to the federal government belong by default to the states. Allowing each state to determine its course ensured that in much of the country women would never win the ballot.

Under this onslaught, the suffrage establishment did not die, but it aged and grew weary. Elizabeth Cady Stanton's daughter Harriot Stanton Blatch, returning to the United States from England in 1902, encountered a movement "completely in a rut. . . . It bored its adherents and repelled its opponents."<sup>8</sup>

Then, in the ensuing years, fueled by a potent combination of education, frustration, anger, and courage, a new sisterhood rallied to the cause. The movement had but one goal: a constitutional amendment allowing women the country over to vote. A Massachusetts congressman labeled members "iron-jawed angels."<sup>9</sup> Their leader was Alice Paul, a New Jersey Quaker, who had apprenticed with the British suffragettes. Paul was not only fearless, she was a brilliant tactician, talented fundraiser, and canny publicist. To her side gravitated a cadre of fiercely dedicated women. As Paul launched her campaign in 1913 with a spectacular parade in the nation's capital, she forged a new army of suffragists: college girls from Vassar, Smith, and Bryn Mawr, along with pioneering "new women" from the depths of Greenwich Village, and middle- and upper-class deserters from more conservative suffrage societies. The movement was

bankrolled in part by the wealthy Alva Belmont, formerly Alva Vanderbilt, who found suffrage politics more fulfilling than her pampered life at the pinnacle of New York society.

They were not many. Perhaps sixty thousand at their peak. For seven years, they battled with great spirit against skepticism, ridicule, violence, and challenges to their patriotism to bring American women their most fundamental right of citizenship—the vote.



## CHAPTER ONE

# QUAKER, SOCIAL WORKER, SUFFRAGETTE!

*I cannot understand how this all came about. Alice is such a mild-mannered girl.*

—Tacie Paul, Alice Paul's mother  
New York Times, *November 13, 1909*

Alice Paul grew up in a Quaker cocoon. Born January 11, 1885, she was a member of the eighth generation of American Quakers descended from Philip Paul, who fled religious persecution in England in 1685 and settled in what is now Paulsboro, New Jersey. She attended Quaker schools and Quaker meetings in Moorestown, New Jersey, a town settled by Quakers. Late in life, she would tell an interviewer, “I never met anybody who wasn’t a Quaker, and I never heard of anybody who wasn’t a Quaker, except that the maids we had were always Irish Catholics.”<sup>1</sup>

It was those “gay maids,” as she called them, whose flights from their third-floor lodgings on their free days to attend dances where music was played—*music!*—suggested suspect pleasures.<sup>2</sup> Elsewhere, young people might gather round the piano in the parlor and croon “After the Ball” or “The Band Played On” or even “A Hot Time in the Old Town.” But Alice’s parents, William and Tacie Paul, were particularly devout members of the Society of Friends, as