

## CONVENTION AND WOMAN SUFFRAGE

Appeared in the *Woman's Exponent*, April 1, 1895, Vol. 23, No. 17

A call for the convention of the Utah Woman Suffrage Association was issued about the middle of March and telegrams and letters sent out to notify those living at a distance from headquarters who would wish to attend, and on the 18th of March the Utah Territorial W.S.A. held a convention...

In the afternoon many of the ladies went into the hall where the Constitutional Convention was in session. Hon. F. S. Richards a member of the Convention presented the memorial, it was read by the secretary and referred to the committee on Elections and Suffrage.

TO THE HONORABLE PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL  
CONVENTION OF UTAH:

We your petitioners and memorialists, representing the great majority of the women of Utah, and more particularly as the official representatives of the great woman organizations of Utah, numbering in aggregate membership over 35,000, viz...

It is a matter of congratulation that in these closing years of the nineteenth century the cause of women can, without the stigma of partnership, be laid before a body of chosen men ordained to the work of creating a new sovereignty within the galaxy of states; as an equal member of the indissoluble Union. The men of Utah, in their respective political parties, have with equal unanimity, said that women shall be accorded equal rights and privileges of citizenship, that sex distinction shall no longer be a ban and a bar to equal opportunity with men to exercise the God-given powers and capabilities which women are endowed for purposes of equal self-government and equal enjoyment of the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness.

We are glad to feel assured that our brothers are dealing honestly and righteously with us, and that they will ordain truth and justice in the name of God and humanity. And we are happy, too, in the belief that these overtures made by the men of Utah are in line with the onward march of civilization...the woman movement means only true human progress. It means higher and truer harmony, more genuine and enlightened fellowship, more real co-operation, more vital and perpetual union...

We have thousands of women in Utah who are property holders and tax payers in their own right. Probably no other state furnishes as large a roll of taxpaying women. "Taxation without representation is tyranny." ...

These axioms are as clear as sunlight, and it would in violation of the fundamental principles of our institutions for the men of Utah to frame laws whereby women property holders shall be taxed without their consent given through such representation as is accorded to men as a condition precedent to their being taxed.

Again, in all our constitutions, either in terms or in substance, commence their preamble with that comprehensive formula, "We, the people." ... Whatever the status of women may be, they are at least a part of the people...

Furthermore, by the Declaration of Independence, the existence of government hinges upon “the consent of the governed.” This consent is to be given through the forms and provisions whereby governments are made and administered...Hence the disfranchisement of half the people and a large proportion of taxpayers and creators of wealth is tyranny pure and simple, even though it be under the shadow and in the name of liberty and free government...

And above all we would impress you with the fact that the women of Utah are by no means indifferent spectators of the drama that is now being enacted. We believe that the woman movement has come because the sun of our civilization has thrown across our social horizon the dawning of a new and more glorious era in history of man...We believe that both men and women will be benefited morally, socially, and economically. We believe that now the time clock of American destiny has struck the hour to inaugurate a larger and truer civil life, and that the future writers of Utah history will immortalize the names of those men who, in this Constitutional Convention, defying the injustice and prejudice of the past, strike off the bonds that have heretofore enthralled women, and open doors that will usher her into free and full emancipation.

We therefore ask you to provide in the Constitution that the rights of citizens of the State of Utah to vote and hold office shall not be denied or abridged on account of sex and that male and female citizens of the State shall equally enjoy all civil political and religious rights and privileges.

The memorial was signed by the following ladies: Emmeline B. Wells, president of the Woman's Suffrage Association of Utah; Emily S. Richards, vice president; Zina D. H. Young, president of the National Woman's Relief Society; Jane S. Richards, vice president; Ellen B. Ferguson, Salt Lake County Suffrage Association; Electa Bullock, Utah County; Lucy A. Clark Davis and Jennie Nelson, Weber County; Celia E. Bean, Sevier County; Alvira L. Cox, Sanpete Co.; M. A. Grover, Juab County and many others.