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Eighth Annual Report: Mississippi Woman Suffrage Association

Mississippi Woman Suffrage Association

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Eighth Annual Report



Mississippi Woman

Suffrage Association



April 1912

EIGHTH ANNUAL REPORT
Mississippi Woman Suffrage
Association



April, 1912

OFFICERS

Mississippi Woman Suffrage Association, 1912-13.

President—Mrs. Lily Wilkinson Thompson, 503 Fortification street, Jackson.

First Vice-President—Mrs. S. Fannie Clark, Okolona.

Second Vice-President—Mrs. Annie Kinkead Dent, Yazoo City.

Corresponding Secretary—Mrs. Ella O. Biggs, 1031 Robinson street, Jackson.

Recording Secretary—Mrs. F. R. Birdsall, Yazoo City.

Treasurer—Mrs. Frances M. Durrant, Coffeetown.

STANDING COMMITTEES.

Legislative.

Chairman, Mrs. Nellie Nugent Somerville, Greenville.

Mrs. Annie Kinkead Dent.

Mrs. Monroe McClurg.

Mrs. J. M. Jayne.

Miss Allee Dunn.

Education.

Chairman, Mrs. Warren Cox, Columbus.

Mrs. W. S. Lindamood.

Mrs. J. E. Thomas.

Institutional.

Chairman, Mrs. Madge Quin Fugler, McComb City.

Mrs. Thomas M. Searles.

Mrs. C. A. Richardson.

Mrs. Allie Bridges Jones.

Press.

Chairman, Mrs. Nellie N. Somerville, Greenville.

Mrs. Monroe McClurg.

Mrs. Annie Kinkead Dent.

Mrs. C. C. Warren.

Mrs. Madge Quin Fugler.

Member of National Committee.

Mrs. Ruth Noble Warren, Jackson.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION.

For general information, literature and other supplies, address Corresponding Secretary National W. S. A., 505 Fifth avenue, New York.

The official organ of the National W. S. A. is the Woman's Journal, 585 Boylston street, Boston, Mass., price one dollar. Every suffragist should take the Journal.

The New Citizen is published by the Era Club; address 624 Gravier street, New Orleans; price 50 cents.

For enrollment cards and information about State work address the State President or Corresponding Secretary.

Annual membership fee for Mississippi W. S. A. is one dollar.

Eighth Annual Meeting of the Mississippi Woman Suffrage Association

Flora, Miss., April 9-11, 1912

The eighth annual meeting opened with a public meeting at the High School, 8 P. M. April 9.

The President, Mrs. Nellie N. Somerville, opened the meeting with appropriate remarks, explaining high water conditions which had made it difficult for her to be present and which prevented the attendance of others from Greenville. Rev. L. L. Roberts, pastor of the Methodist church, led in prayer. Prof. R. E. Hawkins and Miss Thigpen of Flora gave vocal solos, which were greatly enjoyed. Miss Primrose Thompson of Jackson also added to the pleasure of the occasion with a piano solo. The speaker of the evening was Mrs. Royden Douglas of New Orleans, who gave a most logical and entertaining address on The Christian Woman's Sphere and Stewardship.

Wednesday, April 10, 9 A. M.

Business session opened at 9 A. M. in the Knights of Pythias Hall.

The President, Mrs. Somerville, opened the meeting with prayer. Mrs. Ella O. Biggs was appointed Secretary pro tem.

Reports of State Officers were given as follows.

State President, Mrs. Somerville; Treasurer, Mrs. Frances M. Durrant; Enrollment, Miss Lou Hamblen; Press, read by Miss Mary Wilkinson.

Committees were appointed on credentials, courtesies, resolutions, constitution.

The president reported that our representatives at the National Convention had pledged \$25.00 for the Woman's Journal, of which \$5.00 had been paid and \$1.00 now in the State Treasury for that fund; also said Greenville Club would give \$5.00, leaving a balance to be raised of \$14.00.

The Secretary read an encouraging report from Jackson Club.

Wednesday, April 10, 3 P. M.

Meeting called to order by the President. Minutes of morning session were read and approved.

A good audience of business men, some of them from the country, had assembled to hear Mrs. Douglas speak on the work of the Era Club. In deference to their wish business was suspended and Mrs. Douglas was introduced and made an able address.

A letter of greeting from Miss Belle Kearney was read.

Discussion of the constitution was taken up and the need for revision was explained by the President.

Literature was distributed and membership cards signed by some of the audience.

Wednesday, April 10, 8 P. M.

Hon. J. N. Powers, State Superintendent of Education, one of the speakers for the evening, having been recalled to Jackson by an imperative telegram, an impromptu program was arranged.

Rev. L. L. Roberts led in prayer.

Miss Thigpen again gave a piano solo. By request Miss Belle Kearney's letter of greeting was read by Rev. L. L. Roberts. Mrs. Douglas kindly consented to speak again, making an appropriate reply to some objections to woman suffrage. The President, Mrs. Somerville, made a short speech. The audience was most appreciative. It was especially encouraging to have in the audience many young people.

Thursday, April 11, 9 A. M.

Meeting was called to order by the President. Minutes of former session read and approved. The President reported for Mrs. J. C. Greenley, member of National Executive Committee, who attended the last National Convention in Louisville.

Mrs. Biggs, chairman of the committee on constitution, reported changes in officers, which should be considered before the election. After explanation, changes recommended were adopted, providing for two Vice-Presidents and for election of chairmen of standing committees.

The statement given out by the President that it would be impossible for her to accept renomination was received with deepest regret by those present, and a resolution expressing the State Association's appreciation of her work was adopted and spread upon the minutes.

The election resulted as follows:

President—Mrs. Lily W. Thompson.

First Vice-President—Mrs. S. Fannie Clark.

Second Vice-President—Mrs. Annie K. Dent.

Recording Secretary—Mrs. F. R. Birdsall.

Corresponding Secretary—Mrs. Ella O. Biggs.

Treasurer—Mrs. F. M. Durrant.

Member National Executive Committee—Mrs. C. C. Warren.

Delegates to National Convention—Mrs. Somerville and Mrs. Biggs.

Chairman Legislative Committee, Mrs. Somerville; Education, Mrs. Warren Cox; Institutional, Mrs. Fugler; Press, Mrs. Somerville.

Discussion of constitution was resumed and various changes adopted and ordered printed.

Invitations for the next annual meeting were given from Greenville and Jackson. The invitation of Jackson was accepted.

Mrs. Douglas, being about to leave, spoke a few words of pleasant farewell.

Mrs. Walter Clark and Mr. A. D. Somerville of Clarksdale sent telegrams of greeting and regrets that they could not be present.

The President advised that Miss Jane Addams be invited as the chief speaker for next annual meeting. All present favored the suggestion.

The President asked Mrs. Monroe McClurg to take the chair while her address and recommendations were under consideration.

Mrs. McClurg took the chair and appointed a committee to consider the recommendations in the President's address. All recommendations were adopted without

dissent, to be changed to harmonize with changes in constitution.

The President resumed the chair and called for discussion as to finances, and reported annual pledges for a term of three years, as follows. Mr. and Mrs. C. C. Warren, \$5.00; Mr. and Mrs. Walter Clark, \$5.00; Mrs. Monroe McClurg, \$5.00; Hon. J. M. Cashin, \$5.00; a friend, Sardis, \$10.00. In addition to this, Mrs. Biggs and Mrs. Lipscomb pledged \$5.00 each.

Mrs. Warren asked for discussion in regard to having a booth at the State Fair in Jackson. On motion of Mrs. Biggs, the Executive Committee was authorized to make arrangements for a booth, if possible.

Thursday, April 11, 2 to 4 P. M.

Mrs. Jimmie A. Lipscomb entertained delegates and many of her friends and neighbors with a delightful reception at her beautiful country home, Mt. Ida plantation. By request of the hostess several short talks were made by Mrs. Monroe McClurg, Mrs. C. C. Warren and Mrs. Somerville.

Thursday, April 11, 7 P. M.

Mr. Omar Garwood of Denver and Rev. E. T. Edmonds of Jackson were the speakers for the closing evening. The meeting was opened with prayer by Dr. Edmonds.

Mr. Garwood spoke in strong terms of the false charges against the women of Colorado and fully vindicated woman suffrage in that State. Mr. Edmonds gave a most inspiring good government address, showing that New Zealand is far ahead of us in other things besides woman suffrage.

Mr. C. C. Warren, chairman of resolutions committee, read resolutions of thanks.

Miss Wilma Childress of Flora made a graceful address of farewell.

Mrs. Somerville again thanked the people of Flora especially for the large and appreciative audiences and for their liberal contribution to expenses, and closed the evening with the wish, "God be with you till we meet again."

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

(The President's address was published separately and is given here in condensed form.)

Four years' experience as State President has convinced me that the progress of woman suffrage in this State is entirely a question of money. Active organizing could be done and thousands of members enrolled if the expense of such work could be paid by the State Association. An organization for the promotion of a political question cannot be supported on the basis of a small membership fee. Many adherents can not afford to pay, while others could give liberally. The Kentucky Association has dropped the membership fee entirely, but all who enroll as members are expected to respond, if able to do so, when called upon by the Treasurer. Like the political parties, the suffrage work must be supported chiefly by the voluntary contributions of those adherents who are able and willing to contribute.

An effort should be made to secure pledges of annual subscriptions for a term of at least three years. A few such pledges have been made. All State Officers should be authorized to act as financial agents to the extent of trying to secure such pledges. In some organizations the expensive work is done by local Societies, rather than by the State organization. In suffrage work the real work and the heaviest expense devolve upon the State organizations. Our members have not yet learned to appreciate this distinction.

County Clubs should be formed. The county unit plan will secure the adherence of many men and women who will not take part in the routine work of a local Club.

A National Men's League has been formed, with Mr. Omar Garwood, of Denver, as Secretary. The California victory was due largely to the splendid work of the Men's League. An effort has been made to represent the suffrage work as a conspiracy among a few women against the peace and welfare of all men. Such is not

the case; "woman's cause is man's." No race of men can rise above their mothers. The suffrage movement is an effort to elevate the entire race by elevating its womanhood.

I hope the Mississippi men who stand with us will soon feel moved to form a men's league and give their active assistance, as they are already giving moral and financial support.

The activity in suffrage work is shown by the many requests and invitations for co-operation which have come during the year. Miss Chrystal MacMillan, Secretary of International Alliance, Edinburgh, asked for a statement of some Mississippi laws to be used in a handbook. A full reply was sent. Mrs. Blatch invited the Association to take part in the parade in New York in May. Mrs. Mary R. Plummer, Corresponding Secretary of Illinois Associations, has requested that we co-operate and send delegates to a Mississippi Valley celebration in Chicago in May. Many Southern suffragists desire some kind of Southern federation, though not in any sense against the National. There has been some correspondence on this subject among the officers of the various Southern Associations. I hope this will have your endorsement. Various magazines which are supporting the movement ask our co-operation. The excellent work of *The Delineator* deserves special mention and support.

Woman suffrage is a popular subject for debates in high schools and colleges. Much interest has been shown by college students during the year. The State educational committee should endeavor to put the *Woman's Journal* in all college libraries, and to send speakers wherever they will be welcome. Competent speakers can be secured within our own State. Mrs. Walter Clark of Clarksdale has offered a prize for the best essay on woman suffrage by a pupil in the ninth grade. This is a good example which should be followed by many suffragists.

The last annual meeting passed resolutions on child labor, the age of consent, and juvenile reformatory; but the only resolutions proposing original legislation were the following.

Resolved, That the next legislature be petitioned to submit an amendment making women eligible to serve as county superintendents of education.

Resolved, That we petition the next Governor to appoint women to serve on State boards of trustees and educational and benevolent institutions.

Successful legislative work requires special study. All of the legislation especially advocated by various organizations of women was defeated. This should teach a lesson in co-operation. I recommend that the various State-wide organizations of women (or as many of them as will) be invited to unite with us in forming a central committee, composed of two members from each organization, for the purpose of securing such legislation as shall be agreed upon by all. I suggest that you select two representatives to act for you in case this plan can be put into operation.

NELLIE N. SOMERVILLE.

ANNUAL REPORT OF CORRESPONDING SECRETARY MISS. W. S. A.

In summing up the achievements of the year, it is inevitable that there should be disappointment that the full measure of the harvest that lay ready to the sickle has not been garnered. Yet we are thankful that we come with hands not entirely empty.

Mississippi has not been left untouched by the wand of progress. Though we cannot claim that we have taken seven-league strides, nevertheless very gratifying gains have been made in certain localities. As the aggregate of the State output must consist, largely, of the sum of its local activities, I feel we have no cause for discouragement.

The Greenville Civic Club has made a phenomenal growth in numbers and has given evidence of intelligent and sustained effort toward influencing governmental policies in the town. The Jackson Club has made astonishing progress. Increased interest lately manifested in Columbus leads to the hope that that progressive little city will soon be one of the strongholds of the faith. The earnestness and devotion of the Flora Club is shown by the presence as their guest of this body today. New members are coming in constantly from all over the State and old members are showing increased interest and devotion.

Fifty-one Mississippi towns are represented in our enrolled membership.

DELL KELSO MOHLENHOFF.

REPORT OF PRESS WORK.

Mrs. Lily Wilkinson Thompson.

At the beginning of the year I wished to decline the office of Press Superintendent, but allowed my name to stand in deference to the opinion of other officers; with the understanding that the State President and Corresponding Secretary should give active assistance to this department.

In accordance with that agreement, the State President assumed general oversight of the Press work, and the Corresponding Secretary agreed to supply three weekly papers, besides assisting in other ways. My personal work consisted chiefly of editing the column in the Jackson Evening News.

I have written for the Jackson News within the year, about fifty-five articles, from a single paragraph to nearly a page in length. By request of the editor I also wrote an extended article on woman suffrage for the State Fair edition of the Daily News.

Mrs. Ruth Noble Warren and Mrs. Mary Green Burke have contributed admirable articles to this department.

The value of the space in the Daily News is obvious to those who know that through its columns we secure an audience in thousands of Mississippi homes.

I have sent out five copies of the Woman's Journal weekly and distributed a large number of leaflets and various kinds of suffrage literature.

Mrs. Fugler's valuable paper on "Women as School Trustees" was published in several papers, and also in leaflet form. Twenty-five copies of the National bulletin have been sent out weekly.

The Greenville Times and the Greenville Democrat give a weekly column. The Cleveland Enterprise also gives space and prominence to suffrage news. The Green County Herald and Southern Sentinel are on our exchange list. The Lambert Mirror and Ackerman Tribune have recently opened their columns. The papers which give occasional space are hard to specify, but among them are the Yazoo Sentinel, Brookhaven Leader, Green-

wood Enterprise, Columbus Commercial, Magnolia Gazette, Summit Sentinel, Magnolia News, McComb City Journal, McComb City Enterprise.

Some of our members report the publication of suffrage notes, but fail to give the name of the paper, hence a full report cannot be made.

The New Orleans Item stands for woman suffrage and publishes any State news which we send. The "New Citizen," published by the Era Club, New Orleans, will also give space to our work.

The irregular manner in which this department was conducted during the year makes an exact report impossible, but those who have assisted feel assured that the press work has grown, and all parts of the State have been reached, though not as regularly as could be desired. The press bulletins alone would make 1,200 pages of valuable literature.

I hope this report serves to show what an important phase of our work the press department is, and how many opportunities it unfolds for the swift promotion of the cause.

LILY WILKINSON THOMPSON.

REPORT OF ENROLLMENT.

Miss Lou Hamblen, Superintendent.

It is with much regret I have to report that conditions beyond my control have prevented my doing as much work as I hoped to do.

I report in all, 300 cards signed, of which 115 are from Greenville and 65 from Jackson. All active members have not signed cards. At least 200 signatures could be obtained in Greenville if our members would do the work. No doubt the same is true of Jackson. Our enrollment could easily be made 500 in a short time.

The Greenville Club has had Washington county cards printed, and hopes to start a county club. The Jackson Club also had cards printed similar to the State enrollment cards.

The places represented on our enrollment cards last year were as follows:

Greenville, Jackson, Vicksburg, Natchez, Columbus, Clarksdale, Clinton, Flora, Balfour, Yazoo City, Vaiden, West Point, Crystal Springs, Brookhaven, McComb City, Gloster, Grenada, Corinth, Canton, Sharpsburg, Starkville, Coffeerville, Booneville, Sardis, Ellisville, Cleveland, Shaw, Tutwiler, Belen, Okolona, Hernando, Rienzi, Arkabutla, Anguilla, Askew and Tchula.

I am especially pleased to report some signatures at Millsaps College, Jackson, and Mississippi College, Clinton, but have not the exact figures.

I hope a more active superintendent may be appointed next year, and I shall continue to do what I can.

The State President has been the custodian of the signed enrollment cards.

LOU HAMBLÉN.

TREASURER'S REPORT.

RECEIPTS.

Balance from last year.....	\$ 63.14
Receipts during 1911, April to April.....	110.87
Receipts from Jackson during convention.....	18.50
Receipts from Flora for convention.....	21.00
Mrs. Monroe McClurg, State dues.....	1.00
	<hr/>
	\$214.51

DISBURSEMENTS.

Expense account for year 1911.....	\$116.57
Paid Mrs. Royden Douglas, April, '11.....	15.00
Paid Mr. Omar Garwood, April, '11.....	65.00
Paid Dr. E. T. Edmonds, April, '11.....	5.00
Paid Mrs. J. A. Lipscomb, April, '11.....	1.25
	<hr/>
	\$202.82

Balance on hand April, 1911.....\$11.69

FRANCES M. DURRANT, Treasurer.

RESOLUTIONS OF THANKS.

Resolved, That we tender our thanks to the school trustees and to Professor Bailey, for the use of the school house, and to the Knights of Pythias for the use of their hall.

Resolved, That we most heartily thank Rev. L. L. Roberts for his cordial and brotherly assistance in attending our meetings, and responding to every call made upon him.

Resolved, That we sincerely thank Mrs. Douglas for her presence and eloquent presentation of the cause.

Resolved, That we especially thank Mr. Garwood for his great kindness in taking so long a journey and using every possible effort to advance the cause in this State.

Resolved, That we thank Dr. E. T. Edmonds of Jackson for his very interesting address.

Resolved, That we thank Hon. J. N. Powers for coming to our meeting, and regret that he should have been unexpectedly recalled.

Resolved, That we also thank the talented musicians, Dr. Hawkins, Miss Thigpen and Miss Primrose Thompson, for their delightful music, which contributed to our pleasure.

Resolved, That we especially thank Miss Alma Childress, Mrs. Freda Sebulsky, Miss Sarah Roland and Miss Elizabeth Lipscomb, for their many good offices and valuable assistance in making this meeting a success.

To the people of Flora in general, including the school boys and girls who have composed our evening audiences, we tender our thanks for the cordial reception and intelligent hearing given to our speakers; and we also thank the people of Flora for their generous contribution to the expenses of the occasion.

These resolutions would be incomplete, without sincere expression of thanks and appreciation to our hostess in chief, Mrs. J. A. Lipscomb, whose unstinted hospitality and untiring efforts have made the occasion most delightful and successful.

CYRUS C. WARREN.
MRS. FRANCES M. DURRANT.

Resolutions.

The Woman Suffrage Association of Mississippi, in convention assembled, declares that the principle of equal rights alone expresses the American ideal of self-government, and we as women are governed and taxed, logic and honesty both demand woman's enfranchisement by the States in order to vindicate the principles of our government.

Resolved, That this Association expresses its regrets at the retirement of its President, Mrs. Somerville, and its appreciation of her good generalship in the pioneer suffrage work of Mississippi, and of her continued labors that have witnessed the results of her work.

Resolved, That the Association rejoices in the enfranchisement of the women of the State of California. This enfranchisement places a new star on the Woman Suffrage flag—the only flag which symbolizes our national ideals.

Resolved, That we rejoice that the women of California are now equipped with the power to make them factors in controlling and directing the influences affecting the woman's sphere—the home.

Resolved, That we rejoice in the tremendous growth of the suffrage sentiment all over the civilized globe, which sentiment is enfranchising the women of all other nationalities as well as those of the different States. We rejoice that China has enfranchised her women upon the same terms as men. We extend our good wishes and congratulations to the campaign States of Oregon, Kansas, Wisconsin, Ohio and Michigan and recommend that all Mississippi suffragists contribute and render all possible assistance to the work in these campaign States.

Resolved, That the women of Mississippi Woman Suffrage Association will redouble their efforts to secure better legislation for women and children in the industrial world—to secure the extermination of the white slave horror, which is a blot on our civilization, and to

this end we ask the co-operation of all women's organizations in the State of Mississippi.

Resolved, That we favor better child labor laws and a juvenile reformatory.

Resolved, That as the women of many States are serving upon boards of trustees and all over the United States are establishing and maintaining charitable institutions, we believe that if Mississippi is to keep pace with the other States her women should be made eligible for trustees of all eleemosynary institutions.

Resolved, That as the interests of home and school are so closely connected we believe that women should be made eligible for school trustees and county superintendents of education, and we appeal to the women of Mississippi to give their active support to this movement.

CYRUS C. WARREN.
MRS. ROYDEN DOUGLAS.
MRS. FRANCES M. DURRANT.