

Sarah Jane Corson Downs, Ocean Grove

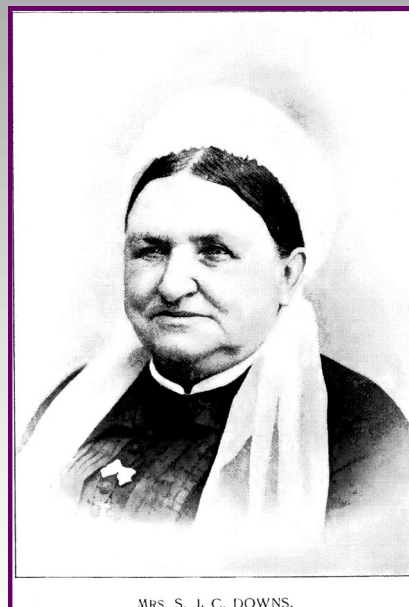
Audiences listened with rapt attention when Sarah Downs, a social reformer with a booming voice and daunting appearance, condemned alcohol as “the enemy.” As previously mentioned, Downs became president of the New Jersey Woman’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) in 1881. Despite her tough demeanor, “Mother Downs” was kind and loving.

Sarah was born in 1822 to an old Philadelphia family, members of the Dutch Reformed Church. When she was five, her father died and, in the 1830s, her widowed mother moved the family to New Jersey, initially in Pennington. Sarah experienced “a conversion” at seventeen and became an Evangelical Methodist. While teaching school in New Egypt, she met a widower, Methodist circuit minister Rev. Charles S. Downs. After they married in 1850, Sarah left teaching and cared for their children. When Rev. Downs retired for health reasons, the family relocated to Tuckerton. To make ends meet, Sarah resumed teaching and wrote newspaper articles. After Rev. Downs died in 1870, she raised funds for a new church and became increasingly interested in women’s welfare.

In the mid-1870s, Downs moved to Ocean Grove, the dry Methodist seaside town that would become known for its women activists and entrepreneurs. In 1882, she purchased a house lease at 106 Mount Tabor Way for \$490. During her Ocean Grove years, Downs significantly increased the WCTU membership. Loyal to Frances Willard, national WCTU president, Downs supported suffrage as “a means for women to better protect their homes and children” and to help achieve the prohibition of alcohol.

After a brief illness, Downs died in 1891. She was working on WCTU affairs even during her final hours.

Excerpt by Karen L. Schnitzspahn from the Monmouth County Archives “Four Centuries of Monmouth County Women” Exhibit Catalog, which will be available online at MonmouthCountyClerk.com/Archives mid October.



MRS. S. J. C. DOWNS



The Monmouth County Clerk’s Office *commemorates* The Centennial of the Nineteenth Amendment

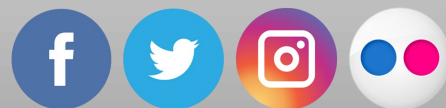


1914—A group of women stand at their booth on the Asbury Park Boardwalk for the New Jersey Suffrage Campaign

Photo Courtesy of Library of Congress, Corbis Historical Collection

Christine Giordano Hanlon, Esq.
Monmouth County Clerk

#WomensVote100Monmouth



Engage with the Monmouth County Clerk’s Office on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Be sure to use our hashtag #WomensVote100Monmouth!

*Message from Monmouth County Clerk
Christine Giordano Hanlon, Esq.*

As you may be aware, 2020 marks the 100th Anniversary of the 19th Amendment, which granted women the right to vote. Since my office oversees a large part of the elections process for Monmouth County, I am very excited to launch a recognition program of the 19th Amendment Centennial, to commemorate this historic milestone.

Throughout the next year, I encourage you to visit our elections website at www.MonmouthCountyVotes.com and to follow the Monmouth County Clerk's Office on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. We will update our pages about the latest events and with historic flashbacks honoring the 100th Anniversary of the 19th Amendment, using the hashtag #WomensVote100Monmouth.

In addition, please be on the look out for future editions of this booklet in the coming months, available on our website and at our offices, which will provide updated information about 19th Amendment Centennial events and programs in our area.

Very truly yours,



*Christine Giordano Hanlon, Esq.
Monmouth County Clerk*



DID YOU KNOW? Historically, “pink teas” were ultra-feminine gatherings featuring frilly decorations, pink doilies and rose-colored tea. The pink teas provided a disguise of a frivolous social affair, however, they were really an opportunity for women, whose husbands, relatives and peers did not want them engaging in politics, to meet. The pink tea meetups served as an opportunity for women to discuss their right to vote campaign without the knowledge of opponents, who often happened to be family members.

*County Clerk's 24th Annual Monmouth County Archives and History Day
Hosted by Clerk Hanlon and the Monmouth County Clerk's Office*

*Saturday, October 12, 2019 from 9 A.M. to 3 P.M.
Monmouth County Library Headquarters, 125 Symmes Drive, Manalapan, NJ 07728*

More than 60 local and state history organizations will put up displays relating to New Jersey history and their organizations. Bring the family, enjoy the exhibits and learn something new about Monmouth County's distinct history! This year's exhibit is “Monmouth County Women”

**“Someone Must Wash the Dishes:
An Anti-Suffrage Satire”**

Presented by Michele LaRue, From 1 P.M. to 2 P.M.
Based in New York City, LaRue specializes in one-woman productions which reflect on writings from the American perspective published during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.



County Clerk's Archives Week Seminars

Monmouth County Library Headquarters, 125 Symmes Drive, Manalapan, NJ 07728

Tuesday, October 15, 2019

**“Iron Jawed Angels” Movie Screening
2 P.M.**

A 2004 film starring Hillary Swank about young women activists who fought for women suffrage.

Wednesday, October 16, 2019

Performance as Lillian Feickert

Presented by actor and storyteller Carol Smith Levin
1 P.M. to 2:30 P.M.

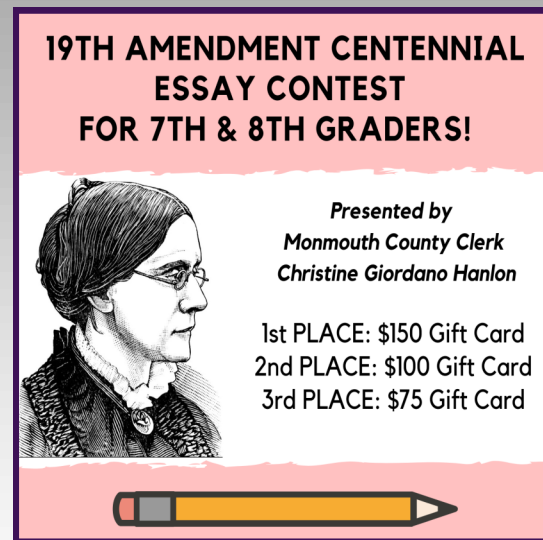
Levin's performance will focus on New Jersey Women's involvement in the national suffrage movement and the contributions of women with connections to the State.

19th Amendment Centennial Essay Contest for Middle School Students

Seventh and eighth grade students in Monmouth County are invited to submit an essay highlighting an activist who had a connection to Monmouth County or New Jersey, and to explain the importance of his or her role to the ratification of the 19th Amendment.

Winners will be honored by Clerk Hanlon at the County Clerk's Archives & History Day on Saturday, October 12, 2019.

The contest is open through Monday, October 7, 2019. For full contest rules and eligibility, please visit MonmouthCountyClerk.com.



Local Events Commemorating the 19th Amendment Centennial

Alice Paul Institute's "Alice Paul: In Pursuit of Ordinary Equality"
Ongoing, Tuesday – Friday @ 12 P.M. – 4 P.M.
128 Hooten Road, Mount Laurel, NJ

Alice Paul Institute's Second Saturday Tours @ Paulsdale
Monthly on the Second Saturday @ 12 P.M.
128 Hooten Road, Mount Laurel, NJ

Monmouth County Clerk's Archives Day Keynote "Someone Must Wash the Dishes: An Anti-Suffrage Satire", Presented by Michele LaRue
Saturday, October 12, 2019 @ 1 P.M. – 2 P.M.
Monmouth County Library Headquarters, 125 Symmes Drive, Manalapan, NJ

Monmouth County Clerk presents actor and storyteller Carol Smith Levin's performance as Lillian Feickert
Wednesday, October 12, 2019 @ 1 P.M. to 2:30 P.M.
Monmouth County Library Headquarters, 125 Symmes Drive, Manalapan, NJ

New Jersey Historical Commission (NJHC)'s "New Jersey Women Make History," 2019 New Jersey History Conference
Friday, November 1, 2019
Douglass Residential College, Rutgers University, New Brunswick

Township of Ocean Historical Museum's "Votes for Women: New Jersey and Beyond" Exhibit
Through June of 2020
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday @ 1 P.M. – 4 P.M.
Thursday @ 7 P.M. – 9 P.M.
1st and 2nd Sundays of the month @ 1 P.M. – 4 P.M.
703 Deal Road, Ocean Township, NJ

Local History Room of the Long Branch Public Library's "Reclaiming our Voice: NJ's Role in Women's Suffrage" Performance by Actress Carol Simon Levin
Saturday, March 28, 2020 @ 2 P.M. – 3:30 P.M.
328 Broadway, Long Branch, NJ

County Clerk Hanlon to Honor 19th Amendment Centennial
Wednesday, August 26, 2020
Stay tuned for more details.

Vision 2020's "Toast to Tenacity"
Wednesday, August 26, 2020
Independence Mall, Philadelphia, PA with regional celebrations

Elections Video Contest for High School Students

Clerk Hanlon will again host an elections video contest for high school students in Monmouth County. This year's contest will commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the 19th Amendment, and will ask students to submit an original video that discussing the topic and also encourages their peers to exercise their right to vote.

Students are permitted to work in groups of no more than three members and to use digital and/or traditional special effects in their video entries.

Winners will receive gift card prizes and will be honored by Clerk Hanlon after Election Day.

Stay tuned for the contest which will be launched in early October. For full contest rules and eligibility, please visit MonmouthCountyClerk.com.

General History

The 1848 Seneca Falls Convention marked the formal beginning of the American women's suffrage movement. Notable suffragists, including Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott, demanded legal recognition of women's political rights and sought to educate the public about women's suffrage. An outgrowth of the abolitionist movement, women's suffrage efforts recognized each individual's political liberty regardless of gender. The movement coincided with other reforms in a period of American history known as the Progressive Era, which featured public and legislative initiatives to protect laborers, ensure children's rights, improve public education, mandate temperance, and advance consumer protection.

Multiple organizations formed to support women's suffrage. Prominent leaders included Carrie Chapman Catt, who led the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA), and Alice Paul, a New Jersey native, who headed the National Woman's Party (NWP). Numerous demonstrations, which occasionally involved arrests and physical harm, and lobbying efforts occurred in the second half of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. Finally, with support from President Woodrow Wilson, Congress passed the Nineteenth Amendment on June 4, 1919. New Jersey ratified the Nineteenth Amendment on February 9, 1920 and the States ratified the amendment on August 18, 1920. The Nineteenth Amendment prevents the federal government and the states from denying any individual the right to vote on the basis of sex, ultimately extending the right to vote to women and marking the success of a sustained movement that lasted more than seven decades.

Timeline of Key Events

- 1848, July 19-20: Seneca Falls Convention held in New York
- 1857: Harriet Lafetra petitions New Jersey state legislature to support women's suffrage
- 1869: Wyoming becomes first territory to grant women voting rights
- 1872, November 5: Susan B. Anthony illegally votes in presidential election; later arrested
- 1873, December 23: Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) founded
- 1878: Woman Suffrage Amendment proposed to Congress
- 1884: Therese Walling Seabrook meets with New Jersey Assembly Judiciary Committee
- 1887: WTCU's New Jersey chapter endorses women's suffrage
- 1890, February 18: National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) founded
- 1913, March 3: Suffragists parade on Pennsylvania Avenue
- 1916, November 7: First congresswoman, Jeannette Rankin, elected
- 1918, January 9: President Wilson announces support for women's suffrage
- 1919, May 21: House passes Nineteenth Amendment
- 1919, June 4: Senate passes Nineteenth Amendment
- 1920, February 9: New Jersey ratifies the Nineteenth Amendment
- 1920, August 18: States ratify Nineteenth Amendment
- 1920, August 26: Nineteenth Amendment is officially signed into law

Monmouth County and the Suffrage Movement

Ocean Grove

Ocean Grove was a vibrant center for women's suffrage and temperance activism. Women in the community were uniquely independent as early as the Civil War; women owned 69 percent of properties in Ocean Grove, and a female doctor practiced medicine there. Sarah Jane Corson Downs, New Jersey's second state president of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), moved to Ocean Grove in the 1880s and served the organization when it endorsed women's suffrage in 1887. Some of the most famous suffragists, among them Carrie Chapman Catt and Alice Paul, visited Ocean Grove. Margaret Wilson, President Wilson's daughter and a prolific singer, performed in the community in 1916 and in 1919.



Photo Courtesy of Ocean Grove Historical Society

Shrewsbury

New Jersey was a popular destination for Quakers as early as the 1670s. The Quakers' emphasis on the "equality of souls" contributed to an early recognition of women's value in colonial communities, where women performed in leadership roles and engaged in social activism in regard to abolition, family counseling, and education. Harriet Lafetra, a Hicksite Quaker whose views and practices were more liberal than those of orthodox Quakers, was, according to records, the first known woman to petition the New Jersey state legislature for women's political rights in 1857. Lafetra was heavily involved in Shrewsbury Quakers' meetings and is buried at the cemetery located at the Shrewsbury Friends meetinghouse.

Keyport

Three generations of women's suffrage activists called Keyport home. Therese Walling Seabrook lived on West Front Street and offered fervent support for both temperance and women's suffrage. Seabrook joined other suffragists, including Jersey City's Phebe Hanaford, at a meeting of the New Jersey Assembly Judiciary Committee in 1884 to advocate for a resolution for women's suffrage. Seabrook's daughter, Annie Seabrook Conover, lived on Main Street and was an active WCTU member in the group's Monmouth County chapter. Conover also served as the first president of the Keyport Literary Club, which joined the New Jersey State Federation of Women's Clubs in 1909 and participated in the Keyport Lyceum, now the Keyport Public Library. Her daughter, Vera Conover, was a genealogist and served as Keyport Borough's historian. She preserved and recorded local history pertaining to women's suffrage and other progressive initiatives. The Monmouth County Historical Association possesses much of her written work.