

THE FIRST WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE IN LANCASTER CITY: A COMPARISON WITH THE MALE VOTE; YOUTHFUL AND AGED VOTERS COMPARED

By H. Frank Eshleman

The local history which I present to you, herein, is only six years old. It is valuable, however, because of what it records generally, and also because it preserves, in our archives and publications, woman's first efforts locally, in political self-government.

The year 1920 was the first year the ballot was given to the women in all parts of our country and at that date women began voting in this county.

The registry assessors' returns, for that year, in Lancaster County (and City) reported 16,069 women entitled to vote in the city of Lancaster. Of this number 3,445 women registered thus qualifying themselves to vote. Of those who registered, it seems, all voted and herein they excelled the record of the men since the returns show that only about 83% of the male registrants voted.

It is important historical information to know what percentage of the women, who were entitled to register and vote, actually did register, classified according to age.

We are all well aware that the Census Tabulations on Age, etc., give us the number of adults per thousand, who will be found in each five year bracket from the age of 20 onwards to the end. By using those tabulations we may ascertain what percentage of the women between 21 and 25 inclusive registered, and also the percentage in every other five-year period, registered.

Turning to the number of female registrants in each period, we find that there were 340 women who registered between the ages of 21 and 25 inclusive; 390 between the ages of 26 and 30 inclusive; 344 between the ages of 31 and 35 inclusive; 356 between the ages of 36 and 40 inclusive; 456 between the ages of 41 and 45 inclusive; 399 between the ages of 46 and 50 inclusive; 312 between the ages of 51 and 55 inclusive; 277 between the ages of 56 and 60 inclusive; 182 between the ages of 61 and 65 inclusive; 152 between the ages of 66 and 70 inclusive; 130 between the ages of 71 and 75 inclusive; 107 between the ages of 76 and 80 inclusive; and a few over 80 years of age.

It will be observed in these figures that, while the number of women embraced between each of the succeeding five year brackets, diminish by reason of death as life goes on, yet the number of voters or rather registrants in each bracket continues fairly constant till about the age of 55. This shows that a smaller percentage register and vote in the early years than in the maturer years. I will therefore give the percentages.

Of the women between the ages of 21 and 25 inclusive 12½% registered; of those between 26 and 30 inclusive 16% registered; of those between 31 and 35 inclusive 16% registered; of those between 36 and 40 inclusive 19% registered; of those between 41 and 45 inclusive 27¾% registered; of those between 46 and 50 inclusive 28¾% registered; of those between 51 and 55 inclusive 28½% registered; of those between 56 and 60 inclusive 31½% registered; of those between 61 and 65 inclusive 26% registered; of those between 66 and 70 inclusive 30% registered; of those between 71 and 75 inclusive 37% registered, and of those between 76 and 80 inclusive 37% registered. The highest efficiency in registration was achieved by the women aged 45, of whom 126 registered out of a possible 312 or over 40%.

Of the 12,571 women who did not register or vote, 4,276 or over one-third of them were under 31 years of age and 7,725 or over 60% of them were under 41 years of age.

This resume of female political participation in government, upon their first opportunity, will be valuable for the purpose of measuring their progress in the science of government from that time 6 years ago until now and

henceforth. It is stated in an article in the New Era, in the issue of Nov. 13, 1920, that in the City and County 11,051 women voted in 1920. In the issue of Nov. 4, 1920, it also appears that in the city alone 8,837 men voted and 3,440 women.

We believe that the following facts concerning the male activity in the same election and registration will have historical value, at least, for purpose of comparison.

Of the men between 21 and 25 inclusive only 42% registered; between 26 and 30 only 49%; between 31 and 35, there were 59%; between 36 and 40 there were 70%; between 41 and 45 there were 72%; between 46 and 50 there were 94½%; between 51 and 55 there were 91%; between 56 and 60 there were 98%; between 61 and 65 there were 81%; between 66 and 70 there were 87%; between 71 and 75 there were 83%; between 76 and 80 there were 90%, and over 80 there were 57 male registrants.

There were 15,875 men in 1920 in Lancaster City entitled to vote, and of them 10,703 registered and 8,837 of those registrants voted. That is there were about 5,200 men who did not register and 7,000 who did not vote. There were 4,280 of those not registering under 41 years of age; and 2,764 under 31 years of age.

The total number of men in the said several brackets who did not register in this city in 1920 are as follows: Between 21 and 25 years 1,546; between 26 and 30 years 1,218; between 31 and 35 years 962 between 35 and 40 years 559; or a total under 41 years of 4,285 out of 5,185 or about 80% are under 41 years of age. There were about 5,200 of the 7,000 men who did not vote in the city in 1920, under 41 years of age or about 74%.

The year of highest efficiency in registration among men in the city was attained by the men aged 50 years, of whom 306 registered, that being practically 100%.

In the case of males (as in the case of females) the number registering in each of the five-year brackets remain constant till about the 50th year of age as follows: Between 21 and 25 inclusive 1,124; between 26 and 30 inclusive 1,166; between 31 and 35 inclusive 1,250; between 36 and 40 inclusive 1,303; between 41 and 45 inclusive 1,166 and between 46 and 50 inclusive 1,272. This shows that while because of the thinning out by death the actual number of men filling the successive brackets are continually decreasing, a greater percentage of those who are left, come out to register and vote, so that the total number of votes cast in each bracket remains constant, or, in fact, for a time gradually increases. That is, the poorest participation is by the young.

While our papers are historical and not controversial, yet one may ask, where is the fault? The fault is in our education, of course, in the home, in the school and in every other institution where fitness for self government should be achieved. However there is hope that the dereliction may be amended from the very fact that the delinquency is among the young, for they are susceptible and amenable to training. It may be true, that men and women are not really fit for suffrage until they approach the forties; but if that be true, then it is also true that if they are fit by experience at 40, they would be all the more fit if to that capacity were added the further fitness which those early 10 or 15 years of participation in self government, would have added to their ability. President Coolidge calls non voting "abdication." The person who at the end of his education or early training neglects and refuses to perform his part in self-government is just as censurable as the one who on entering life neglects and refuses to labor and make a living and to support those who are his own.

WOMEN'S VOTE IN LANCASTER, COUNTY, BY PRECINCTS IN 1920
(FIRST WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE).

According to the Women Members of the Campaign Advisory Committee for Lancaster County, acting for the Dominant Party, in an article appearing in the New Era of November 13, 1920, there were 11,051 women who exercised the franchise in Lancaster County and City when given the first opportunity to do so that year. The number of women voting at the different precincts were as follows:

Adamstown Boro, 83; Akron Boro, 45; Bart Twp., 47; Brecknock Twp. (Bowmansville District), 21, and Muddy Creek, 6; Caernarvon Township, 60; Christiana Boro, 130; Clay Township, 44; Cocalico Township, East, 93; West Cocalico Township (Blainsport), 12, and Schoeneck, 26; Colerain Township, 102; Columbia Boro, 1st Ward, 140; Second Ward, 142; Third Ward, 80; Fourth Ward, 284; Fifth Ward, 192; Sixth Ward, 223; Seventh Ward, 208; Eighth Ward, 65, and Ninth Ward, 238; Conestoga Township, 40; Conoy Township, 110; Denver Boro, 131; East Donegal Township (Lincoln School House), 58; Maytown, 127, and Springville, 300; West Donegal Township, 165; Drumore Township, 55; East Drumore Township, 45; Earl Township (New Holland District, 21, and Martindale, 15); East Earl Township (Blue Ball, 87, and Terre Hill, 9); West Earl Township (Earlville, 119, and Farmersville, 7); Eden Township, 33; Elizabeth Township, 3; Elizabethtown Boro, 334; Ephrata Boro (First Ward, 105; Second Ward, 98; Third Ward, 38, and Fourth Ward, 55); Ephrata Township (Akron District, 19; Lincoln, 57, and Murrell, 18); Fulton Township, 145; East Hempfield Township (Landisville, 82; Petersburg, 82, and Rohrerstown, 57); West Hempfield Township (Mountville, 17; Norwood, 34; Northwestern, 17, and Silver Spring, 13); East Lampeter Township, 85; West Lampeter Township, 84; Lancaster City, First Ward, 187; Second Ward (First Prec., 244, and Second Prec., 97); Third Ward, 216; Fourth Ward, 245; Fifth Ward (First Prec., 238, and Second Prec., 242); Sixth Ward (First Prec., 174; Second Prec., 298, and Third Prec., 118); Seventh Ward (First Prec., 301; Second Prec., 94, and Third Prec., 91); Eighth Ward (First Prec., 191; Second Prec., 112, and Third Prec., 64); Ninth Ward (First Prec., 63; Second Prec., 77, and Third Prec., 346); Lancaster Township, 146; Leacock Township, 39; Upper Leacock Township, 110; Lititz Boro (First Ward, 180, and Third Ward, 51); Little Britain Township, 126; Manheim Boro (First Ward, 53; Second Ward, 126, and Third Ward, 18); Manheim Township (Northern District, 23, and Southern District, 126); Manor Township (Indiantown, 48; Manor New, 5, and Millersville, 167); Marietta Boro (First Ward, 86; Second Ward, 88, and Third Ward, 118); Martic Township, 43; Mount Joy Boro (East Ward, 100, and West Ward, 68); Mount Joy Township (Lower, 21; Milton Grove, 3, and Upper, 13); Mountville Boro, 105; New Holland Boro, 160; Paradise Township, 95; Penn Township (Junction, 8; South Penn, 5, and Unionville, 2); Pequea Township, 29; Providence Township, 66; Quarryville Boro, 125; Rapho Township (Newtown, 0; Sporting Hill, 7; Strickler's School House, 5, and Union Square, 2); Sadsbury Township (Cambridge, 55; Gap, 84; Spring Garden, 34, and White Horse, 26); Strasburg Boro (First Ward, 70; Second Ward, 38, and Third Ward, 27); Strasburg Township, 35; Warwick Township (Warwick, 17, and East Warwick, 57); Washington Boro (Upper Ward, 42, and Lower Ward, 12).
Total, 11,051.

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