

***A Woman's Crusade: Alice Paul and the Battle for the Ballot*****Mary Walton****Palgrave MacMillan, New York, 2010. 304 pp. \$36.99 hardcover. ISBN: 0230611753.****DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.14713/njs.v2i1.38>**

*A Woman's Crusade* by Mary Walton offers a lively and detailed account of Alice Paul's efforts to pass a federal amendment granting women the right to vote. Walton begins by briefly introducing the early influences in Paul's life, including her Quaker family home in Paulsboro, New Jersey, education at Swarthmore, and career as a social worker. But the main story focuses on the years that Paul spent as leader of the National Woman's Party.

Paul's dedication to the cause of women's suffrage was solidified while she was living in England and encountered Christabel Pankhurst and other British suffragettes. In 1907, Paul became an active member of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), participating in the group's various public demonstrations and increasingly militant tactics. Paul was arrested in England, and had her first experiences with the hunger strikes and forced feedings that would later play a prominent role in the campaign for women's suffrage in the United States.

Once Paul returned to the United States in 1910, she became an effective speaker and organizer for the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA). Walton provides an engaging account of how Paul organized a pro-suffrage parade in Washington, D.C., timed to coincide with President Wilson's inauguration. After months of careful planning, unruly crowds disrupted the proceedings, while the police did little to secure the safety of the women participants. Rather than be upset that the parade was marred, Paul willingly used the sympathetic press coverage to further promote the cause of women's suffrage. "The mistreatment by the police was probably the best thing that could have happened to us," Paul noted, "as it aroused a great deal of public indignation and sympathy (79)."

Walton recounts how despite the parade's success in revitalizing public support for women's suffrage, Paul experienced an increasingly acrimonious relationship with NAWSA leadership. This ultimately resulted in Paul's split from that organization and the formation of the National Woman's Party in 1916. These tensions reflected competing strategies, with members of NAWSA supporting state suffrage campaigns, while Paul championed a federal amendment to the Constitution.

Paul and her supporters engaged in speaking campaigns, publicity stunts, and fundraising activities. Most notably, the "Silent Sentinels" began picketing in front of the White House in 1917. As the United States prepared to enter World War I, the sentinels generated fierce controversy. Even the suffragettes in England, Walton notes, suspended their militant campaigns to focus on supporting women's war work. But Paul was determined to continue the picketing, unwilling to push the issue of women's suffrage to the backburner. As Walton recounts, the picketers sustained their efforts, resulting in multiple arrests and imprisonments, followed by hunger strikes and forced feedings. Once again, Paul willingly used media coverage of these events to galvanize support for her cause.

In the later chapters of the book, Walton provides a thorough account of the final campaign for the passage of the federal suffrage amendment, detailing the opposition the amendment faced, first in the Senate and then during the state ratification process. Walton ably shows that Paul and her supporters were savvy political operators, staging dramatic demonstrations of civil disobedience that continued to result in repeated arrests and imprisonments—and continued press coverage.

Throughout *A Woman's Crusade*, readers are introduced to several key suffrage activists, including Mary Beard, Alva Belmont, Mabel Vernon, Sara Bard Field, Harriot Stanton Blanch,

Doris Stevens, and Inez Milholland, “the most beautiful girl in the suffragette movement (62).” Walton provides lively anecdotes of these women’s efforts, demonstrating how a loyal army of workers supported the crusade for suffrage.

The book has a breezy, conversational tone bolstered by Walton’s extensive primary source research of the Alice Paul Papers, the National Woman’s Party Papers, oral histories, and various newspaper accounts. Serious scholars may object that the book lacks substantive engagement with the existing historiography, or with the long history of women’s reform efforts in the United States. Although historians of women and gender may be left longing for more historical context and analysis, general readers wanting to know about the story of Alice Paul and her tireless efforts in support women’s suffrage will find an exciting and engaging narrative.

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