

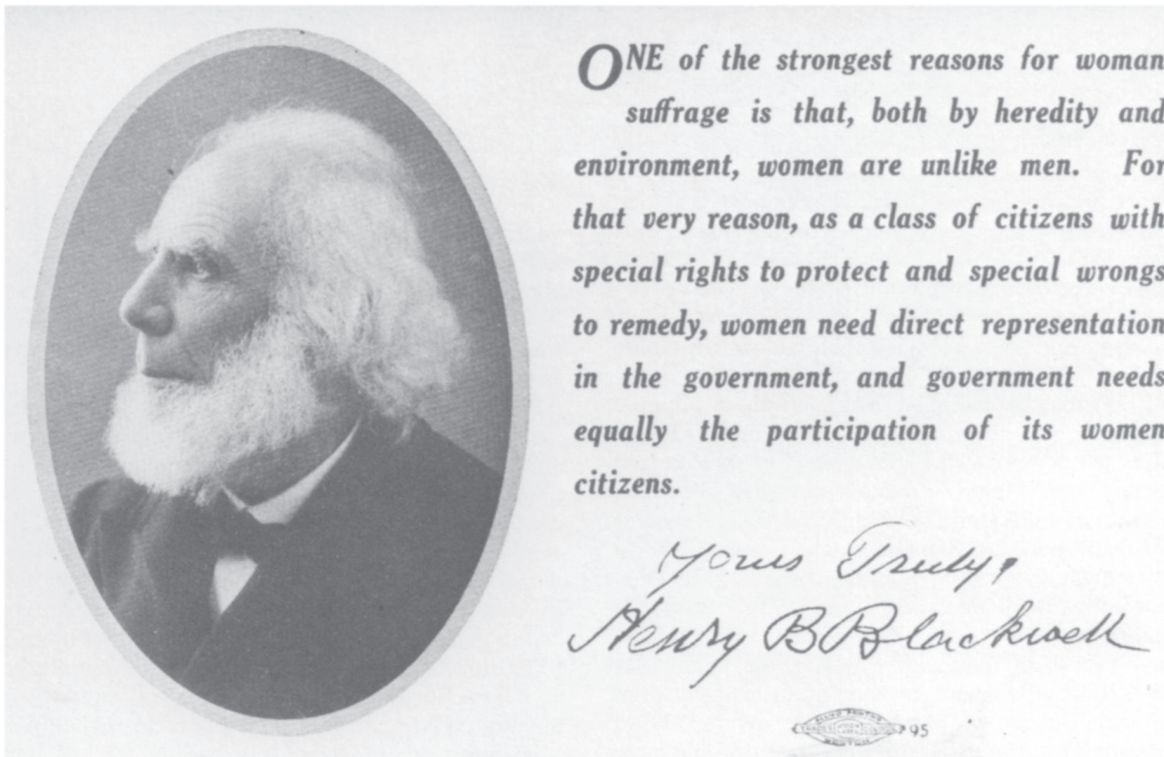
Preamble.

We, the people of Montana grateful to Almighty God for the blessings of liberty, in order to secure the advantages of a State Government, do, in accordance with the provisions of the Enabling Act of Congress approved the 22^d of February A.D. 1889, ordain and establish this Constitution.

PREAMBLE TO THE FIRST MONTANA STATE CONSTITUTION. ADOPTED 1889

BY LESLIE WHEELER

"HERE I FIND MYSELF IN THE QUEEREST CITY YOU EVER SAW, BUILT ALONG THE GULCHES & ON THE SIDES OF THE MOUNTAINS—A HUGE MINER'S CAMP DEVELOPED INTO A BUSTLING ACTIVE CITY OF 15000 INHABITANTS SWARMING WITH MINERS, PROSPECTORS & POLITICIANS," HENRY B. BLACKWELL WROTE TO HIS WIFE AND DAUGHTER ON JULY 14, 1889.¹ HE HAD COME TO HELENA, MONTANA, ON A ONE-MAN CAMPAIGN AIMED AT GETTING THE STATE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTIONS OF MONTANA, NORTH DAKOTA, AND WASH-



WOMAN SUFFRAGE CAMPAIGN POSTCARD, WITH PRINTED SIGNATURE OF HENRY BLACKWELL

WOMAN SUFFRAGE'S GRAY-BEARDED CHAMPION COMES TO MONTANA, 1889

INGTON TO ADOPT WOMAN SUFFRAGE. AS AN OUTSIDER FROM THE EAST WITH ONLY A LIMITED AMOUNT OF TIME TO SPEND IN EACH PLACE, HE HAD A FORMIDABLE TASK AHEAD OF HIM. YET IF ANY MAN COULD SUCCEED, IT WAS HE. IN TERMS OF BOTH BACKGROUND AND TEMPERAMENT, HE WAS IDEALLY SUITED FOR THIS PARTICULAR MISSION. NOT ONLY WAS HE THE VETERAN OF A NUMBER OF STATE SUFFRAGE CAMPAIGNS, BUT HE WAS ALSO THAT RARE INDIVIDUAL—A BOSTONIAN WHO FELT A STRONG AFFINITY FOR THE WEST AND ITS PEOPLE.

BORN IN BRISTOL, ENGLAND in 1825, Henry Blackwell emigrated with his family to America when he was seven. The Blackwells settled first in New York, where Henry's father opened up a sugar refinery. The business prospered until 1838, when reverses made him decide to move to Cincinnati. There he was stricken with "western fever" or malaria, and died, leaving his widow and nine children with a mere \$20. To make ends meet, Henry and his older brother Sam took clerking jobs, while his mother and sisters opened a school in their home. A few years later they had managed to save enough money to send Henry to Kemper College in St. Louis, so that he could study law. But after only a year at that institution, the young man was needed at home to contribute to the family's dwindling income. Thereafter, he drifted from job to job in search of a satisfactory profession. Falling victim to the "yellow fever" for gold that was sweeping the country in 1849, Henry Blackwell invested all of his savings in the manufacture of patent cradles or rockers to separate grains of gold from gravel, and would have joined the Gold Rush in California, but for the timely intervention of an English cousin who loaned Henry and his brother Sam the money to buy a wholesale hardware business in Cincinnati.

Early in the fall of 1850, Henry was tending the hardware store when a "young middle-aged woman" walked in, and asked if she could cash a draft drawn up by the treasurer of the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society. She was Lucy Stone, one of the more remarkable women of her times. Raised on a farm in western Massachusetts by a gentle, self-sacrificing mother, and a harsh, domineering father, she had become a rebel at an early age. Eschewing the conventional route of marriage and motherhood, she taught school until she had saved enough money to attend Oberlin College—then the only institution of higher learning in the country that admitted women. After graduation, she embarked on the most unladylike career of public lecturer on antislavery and woman's rights.

Because of her unfeminine activities, many men were intimidated by Miss Stone, but not Henry B. Blackwell. He was the brother of five women who were extraordinary in their own right. One of his sisters, Elizabeth Blackwell, overcame tremendous obstacles to qualify as the first woman physician in the country, a younger sister also became a doctor, and two of the others distinguished themselves—one as a Paris-based journalist, and the other as an artist and writer. Thus, far from being put off by the notorious Miss Stone, Henry found himself "strangely attracted" to her. But because she was seven years his senior (at the time he was twenty-five, while Miss Stone was thirty-two), he decided she would make a better match for his older brother. With a view toward playing Cupid, he sent Sam with the money from her draft the next day. But Sam was

not smitten as Henry had been; after paying her the money, he immediately departed.

Henry did not see Miss Stone again until three years later, in the summer of 1853, when he went east to find a publisher for a volume of poetry he had written, and also to attend antislavery meetings in New York and Boston. Hearing Miss Stone speak at these meetings, he was so impressed with her eloquence and "superior moral character" that he decided on the spot to marry her. He followed her to her home in West Brookfield, Massachusetts, and wasted no time proposing. She emphatically rejected his suit, but undaunted, he sent Miss Stone a volume of Plato and a long letter, in which he argued that she would lose none of her prized freedom by marrying, and also that together they could accomplish more in the arena of reform than she could alone. Moreover, he arranged a speaking tour of the West that brought Miss Stone back to Cincinnati the following fall.

His efforts in her behalf and his lengthy, eloquently pleading letters began to have their effect; Miss Stone admitted that her feelings for him went beyond those of ordinary friendship, but she continued to resist the idea of marriage. Finally, Henry's role in the dramatic rescue of a young slave girl in Ohio tipped the scales decisively in his favor, and on May 1, 1855, they married. At the beginning of the ceremony, they stood together and read a protest against "such of the present laws of marriage as refused to recognize the wife as an independent and rational being, while they confer on the husband an injurious and unnatural superiority investing him with legal rights which no honorable man would exercise, and which no man should possess."² Lucy Stone also insisted on retaining the use of her maiden name, doing so with resolve and the support of her husband and creating much controversy in the process.

THEY SPENT THE first year of their married life in Cincinnati, and if Henry had had his way they probably would have remained in the West. He owned several hundred acres of land along one of the railroad lines outside of Chicago, and before their marriage, had written her of a plan "to live at Chicago & use my present hard earned acquaintances to build up a wholesale grocery business on the flat shore of blue Lake Michigan."³ He also owned about 6000 acres in Bad Ax (now Vernon) County, Wisconsin. So from a financial standpoint, he had every incentive to remain in the West. Moreover, the spirit of the region held a strong ap-

1. Henry Blackwell to Lucy Stone, July 14, 1889, Blackwell Family Papers (BFP), Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

2. The Stone-Blackwell protest was originally published in *The Worcester (Mass.) Spy*, May 1855, and later quoted in the *History of Woman Suffrage*, (1881), Vol. I, by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joselyn Gage, p. 261.

peal for him, as he had confessed to his bride-to-be: "I do like the West for its freedom, for its growth, for its present geographical & its future greatness. There is something a little angular, and cold & stationary about the East. It has not the geniality & sunshine & comfort which the West possesses in spite of its drawbacks."⁴

Lucy Stone, however, did not share her husband's enthusiasm for the West. One of her brothers had died of cholera in Illinois while she was visiting him, and she herself had been stricken with typhoid fever and nearly died in Indiana. Not surprisingly, these painful experiences soured her towards the area. And the rough manners and often primitive living conditions she saw on the frontier further repelled her. Thus, she argued in favor of the East as a place to live, and her will carried the day. The couple moved first to New Jersey, and later, to Boston.

The birth of a daughter, Alice Stone Blackwell, in 1857 effectively ended Lucy Stone's career as a lecturer for the next decade. She did not return to public life until after the Civil War, and then it was largely due to her husband's support and encouragement. Realizing that it was a waste of her consummate talents as an agitator for her to devote herself exclusively to domesticity, Henry urged her to return to the lecture platform, and when she wavered, he bolstered her sagging confidence by offering to accompany her. In 1867 the Stone-Blackwells stumped the state of Kansas in behalf of black suffrage and woman suffrage. Both proposed amendments to the state constitution were defeated, but the Stone-Blackwells' involvement in this campaign marked the beginning of their long partnership within the suffrage movement. In 1869 when the movement split apart over support for the Fifteenth Amendment (black suffrage) and other issues, they helped form the American Woman Suffrage Association. The next year they began to publish *The Woman's Journal*, which, with an interrupted existence of almost half a century, became the longest-lived of all the suffrage publications.

EDITING THE *Journal* was a full-time job, but the Stone-Blackwells still managed to participate in several state suffrage campaigns. The year 1877 found them in Colorado, where a suffrage amendment was pending. It was a rugged campaign, and there were many times when Lucy Stone must have longed for the comforts of their Boston home. She complained to her daughter that at "the last place where we stopped to lecture before our return to Denver, there was no privy, no chamber vessel [sic], no wash bowl, but a nasty table, at which we ate with the miners, who put their knives into the butter, and who declared, that if women voted they (foreigners) would leave the country." Her husband, on the other hand, enjoyed himself immensely. As Lucy Stone

related in the same letter to her daughter: "Papa has not climbed a single peak yet. But he longs to, and this morning when we stood on a path that looks up & down miles of bare rocky sides of mountains, with the poor, little bare, low houses of miners, and others, stuck into the rocks, he said, 'I would rather live here earning 2 or 3 thousand a year, than to live in Boston earning nothing.['] But I agree with a woman who rode with us, in the southern part of the state. she said 'I'd rather be hung than live here.' Papa likes variety and change, and this is why he *thinks* he could stay here."⁵

In 1882 the Stone-Blackwells took part in another suffrage campaign in the West, this time in Nebraska, and again Henry waxed enthusiastic about the region. To his daughter he wrote, "I would give \$100 if you could have gone with Mamma and me over this wonderful wild new country with its chaotic mixed population from every state in the Union & every nationality in Europe."⁶ It was little wonder that seven years later, he jumped at the chance to go to Montana, North Dakota, and Washington—even though his wife would not be accompanying him. She was now over seventy, stout and plagued by rheumatism, and she did not feel up to another strenuous western campaign. Yet at the same time, she hated to have him go alone; as their daughter recalled her behavior during Henry's absence in the West: "At night Mamma will say in a rather melancholy tone, 'Goodnight Papa, wherever you are,' and I shall say, 'Amen.'"⁷

Henry's first stop was Bismarck, North Dakota. Arriving there on July 3, he held several meetings and addressed the constitutional convention, and then on July 11, he left for Helena on the Northern Pacific Railroad. He found the thirty-hour ride from Bismarck to Helena most interesting as it took him through "the extraordinary 'Badlands' which are 10 000 . . . cliffs and eggheads surrounded by narrow flat vallies [sic] themselves seamed by ravines so as to make an extricable labyrinth of clay, sand, rocks, & pebbles—with petrified stumps & trunks of trees and occasional small patches of verdure on the low flats—then through the desolate weird cliffs which hem in the dry bare Yellowstone Valley with its clear beautiful river. At Livingston we had a fine view of distant snowclad mountains & envied the tourists who there got off for a week's trip in the Yellowstone National Park."⁸

Arriving in Helena on Saturday afternoon, July 13, Henry proceeded to make his rounds with a col-

3. Blackwell to Lucy Stone, December 10, 1854, BFP.

4. Blackwell to Lucy Stone, January 10, 1855, BFP.

5. Lucy Stone to Alice Stone Blackwell, September 21, 1877, BFP.

6. Blackwell to Alice Stone Blackwell, September 24, 1882, BFP.

7. Alice Stone Blackwell, unpublished reminiscences, BFP.

8. Blackwell to Lucy Stone, July 14, 1889, BFP.



The nationally-active woman suffrage campaigners as they appeared about the time of the 1889 efforts

LUCY STONE

HENRY BLACKWELL

lection of letters from prominent people advocating woman suffrage. He was extremely pleased to learn that two fellow suffragists, Perry W. McAdow and his wife Clara, were at their Helena residence. A Kentuckian by birth, McAdow had come to Montana in 1861, and with his wife's able assistance, had succeeded in pulling a fortune out of his mine, the Spotted Horse, at Maiden in Fergus County. Two years earlier, Mrs. McAdow had written to *The Woman's Journal*, appealing to the eastern suffragists to send an organizer to Montana, and now she and her husband welcomed Henry into their home, sparing him the expense of staying at a hotel, about which he had complained while in Bismarck. He was given a turn-down bed in the alcove of the McAdows' parlor, and reported to his wife, "I am really extremely comfortable & as nearly at home as I can be, away from you & Alice."⁹

Besides entertaining Henry with "true western hospitality," the McAdows were able to aid him in his efforts in behalf of woman suffrage. As a delegate to the Constitutional Convention, representing Fergus County, McAdow was a member of the committee of five on suffrage. Henry described him as "a very superior man in mind, manners & appearance but is unfortunately crippled in his legs by partial paralysis & has to sit in a chair—but is in perfect possession of all his faculties."¹⁰

9. Blackwell to Lucy Stone, July 15, 1889, BFP.

10. Blackwell to Lucy Stone, July 14, 1889, BFP.

YET EVEN WITH McAdow's help, the prospect was hardly promising. As Henry summed up the situation to his wife: "There has never been a woman suffrage meeting held in Montana. The subject has never been discussed. There is nothing but the general unsettledness and openhearted liberality of a new country to aid it—the people are ignorant, poor & preoccupied, but enterprising, & bold & well meaning. The politicians are timid and now aspiring to state & National offices. The only hope here, as in No Dakota, is a clause *empowering the Legislature*. If we get that, we shall have here a woman suffrage state within five years; else not in 20."¹¹ With the advantage of hindsight, he could see that he or someone else from the East should have come to Montana a few years earlier when Mrs. McAdow had first written them. Then, in his belief, "we could have carried WS *without difficulty*. So different are the social & political conditions in a Territory."¹² But, he went on to say, "Now all is changed. The people are *being* driven into statehood by the politicians, who are crazy for the State & National offices & who are afraid of *anything* that may endanger the ratification of their new constitution by the voters."¹³

11. Blackwell to Lucy Stone, July 14, 1889, BFP. Blackwell erred in believing that woman suffrage had never been discussed in Montana Territory. See T. A. Larson, "Montana Women and the Battle for the Ballot," *Montana the Magazine of Western History* XXIII (Winter 1973), pp. 26-27.

12. Blackwell to Lucy Stone, July 15, 1889, BFP.

13. Blackwell to Lucy Stone, July 15, 1889, BFP.



Blackwell's Montana hosts, who supported woman suffrage for the soon-to-be forty-first state

PERRY MCADOW

CLARA MCADOW

Nevertheless, he was determined to make the best of what was admittedly a very difficult situation. The weekend of his arrival, he immediately set to work calling on various members of the convention, but as most had gone off on inspection trips to Butte, Great Falls, and Boulder, he was able to see only a few. Among those absent was William A. Clark, the Butte mining magnate who was the president of the convention, and Blackwell reported not very encouragingly to his wife: "He has been drunk while away." Of the men he managed to see, he found that two—Thomas H. Carter and Walter A. Burleigh, both Republicans—were in favor of woman suffrage; two—Martin Maginnis and Joseph K. Toole, both Democrats—were against it. A fifth—influential Chief Justice Henry Blake, a native of Dorchester, Massachusetts, where the Stone-Blackwells made their home—although not a delegate, was opposed to woman suffrage, but "heartily with us for giving control of suffrage to the Legislature."¹⁴

Having taken care of all the business he could over the weekend, he went to see some of the sights in the vicinity of Helena. He rode a steam streetcar to the hot springs west of town, where, in his words, "some enterprising lunatic [Charles Broadwater] is building a hotel with a swimming bath 300 feet long by 120 feet wide occupying an immense dome-roofed structure with dressing rooms &c all round it—the basin varying from 3 feet to 18 feet in depth—the water brought in by pipes from the mountain over an immense artificial pile of huge rocks 25 feet high in

an artificial cascade." Here, he amused himself by drinking water as hot as he could swallow from the spring, wading in six-inch deep dust, and sitting on the tower overlooking "a beautiful but dry panorama of mountains & valleys, bare and desolate as Palestine or Arabia Petrea, except where refreshed by irrigation." Then he walked back over Mount Helena "following a water ditch which supplies Helena with water—looking off over the vallies [sic] of the Prickly Pear, 7 mile [Creek], 10 mile [Creek], and Missouri to the huge piles of Rocky Mountains beyond which bound the view on the North." The dry climate as well as the view appealed to him: "here one cannot catch cold," he wrote, "I sopped my head dripping wet with water on the mountain . . . & in five minutes it was perfectly dry. I walk in the sun with the air 100 in the shade without apparent perspiration. Everybody looks brown & hardy—no pale faces. All is dry, dusty, glaring, parched & jolly."¹⁵

THE WEEKEND OVER, Henry returned to the task of lobbying, and on July 16, was able to report some progress: "We have 22 men who have promised to vote for the empowering of the Legislature, but the Democratic party is, as a whole, against us, with half a dozen exceptions. The Republicans, as a rule, are with us, I think, with

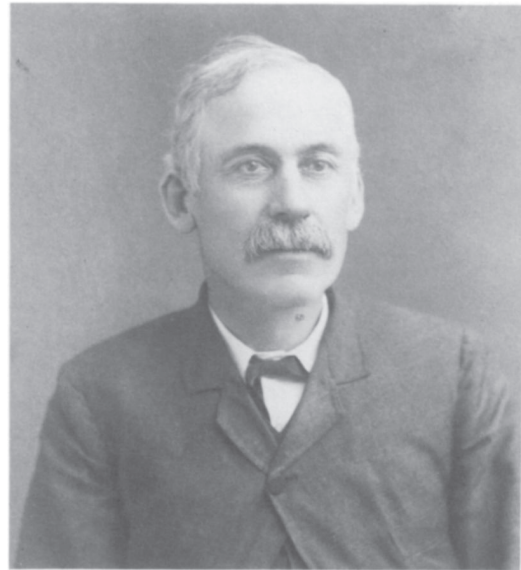
14. Blackwell to Lucy Stone, July 15, 1889, BFP.

15. Blackwell to Lucy Stone, July 15, 1889, BFP.



Supported Blackwell's right to address the constitutional convention

CHARLES WARREN



Opposed including debate by "men from the outside"

JOHN ROBINSON

perhaps eight or ten exceptions. The committee on Suffrage voted *against* the empowering clause 4 to 1—Mr McAdow the sole affirmative. But he will move an amendment & fight it out in the Convention, with all the backing of both parties that we can secure. Tomorrow morning I shall have placed on all the members' desks printed copies of the letters I bring. Gen. Warren will move that I be invited to address the Convention on Woman Suffrage, Martin McGuiness [Maginnis], an influential Democratic opponent, will second the motion. I shall probably have a chance to do my best for the cause & then *go on*." He also reported that he had secured the support of the two Republican papers, and was hopeful of securing that of the Democrat organ, the *Independent*. He closed his letter with a few general reflections on Helena and Montana. "This is a queer place," he wrote, "as different from Bismarck as possible. The people generous, extravagant, enterprising, and impulsive. But great fortunes suddenly made, and the gambling spirit which mining generates are not conducive to reflection or repose of character." He went on to say that "The women here care nothing & know nothing about the Suffrage question," adding that the Remonstrants, a powerful anti-suffrage lobbying group based in Boston, "could easily get up here a Remonstrance that would floor me completely," and cautioned his wife not to say much about his effort in Montana until the battle was won or lost.¹⁶

16. Blackwell to Lucy Stone, July 16, 1889, BFP.

As it turned out, Henry did not secure the backing of the *Independent*, but on July 17, that paper duly noted his presence in the city, describing him as a "venerable Bostonian" whose name "has been for many years prominently identified" with the cause of woman suffrage. The paper also noted that "Mr. Blackwell claims to have assurances of sympathy with the cause he represents from more than one third of the members of the Montana Constitutional convention, and exhibits a letter from President [W. A.] Clark in which that gentleman pledges himself to the proposition that the legislature shall be empowered to extend the right of suffrage without submission of the question to vote of the people."¹⁷

That same day Charles S. Warren, a mining operator and Republican from Silver Bow County, moved that Blackwell be allowed to address the convention. His motion sparked an interesting debate. John C. Robinson, a lawyer from Deer Lodge County, said that he was "opposed to this convention even dignifying the applications of men from the outside. . . . We are perfectly capable of managing our own affairs here without these people coming from the outside & wanting to intrude themselves upon our attention." Robinson's position was indicative of a streak of provincialism that was shared not only by other delegates to the convention, but also by people within the territory as a whole; fortunately, his attitude was not the prevailing one. The following day, the *Independent* censured Robinson for ex-

17. Helena Daily Independent, July 17, 1889.

hibiting "a narrowness of mind," and within the convention itself, other delegates disagreed with him. Hiram Knowles, a lawyer from Silver Bow County and former territorial supreme court justice, argued that the convention should be open to outside opinions, adding that "Mr. Blackwell is a man of character and standing, a man that has been before the public on this question for 20 years or more." When a vote was taken, the convention agreed 55 to 13 to allow Blackwell to address it that evening at eight o'clock.¹⁸

BLACKWELL'S SPEECH was a careful blend of principle and politics, humor and seriousness, lofty rhetoric and folksy anecdotes. It showed how well he understood his audience, and how determined he was not to say anything that might antagonize them, and thereby endanger the cause. This, he felt, was a grave error that other suffrage speakers, especially the women, tended to make. From South Dakota a year later, he wrote his wife, "But our women speakers all make the mistake of seeming to censure men and of using sarcasm instead of a little harmless, good-natured taffy [flattery]."¹⁹

At the outset Blackwell made it clear that if the convention did not feel the time was ripe to put woman suffrage directly into the body of the constitution, he hoped that it would empower the legislature to extend the vote to women. He specifically requested it not to submit the question to the voters as a constitutional amendment. Citing the failure of such an effort in Colorado, he said, "You know it is much like your own state, largely composed of mining camps, largely composed of large cattle ranches." He then launched into one of the standard pro-suffrage arguments: that under the Declaration of Independence, women had the same right to "life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness" that men did. He got his first laugh of the evening with one of Benjamin Franklin's famous stories. Recalling how male franchise had originally been limited by property qualifications, he related Franklin's tale of a man in Pennsylvania who was allowed to vote because he owned a jackass that weighed 40 pounds. But when the jackass died, the man lost the privilege, causing Franklin to comment: "Who, then, is it that votes in Pennsylvania, the man or the jackass?"²⁰

Having thus put his audience in a good frame of mind, Blackwell went on to strike a patriotic note by telling how the discovery that men had equal rights in America produced a stream of immigration that transformed "a few feeble agricultural colonies" in-

to a "great continental nation." This remark brought him his first round of applause, and he was quick to capitalize on the success. As soon as he had made the claim for woman suffrage on the basis of simple justice, Blackwell appealed to his listeners' self-interest: "Now if you have the manhood, the enlightenment, the courage to put full woman suffrage . . . into the body of your state constitution, I can promise you that within five years you would have in Montana 100,000 of the most progressive and the most desirable immigrants that America can furnish." In a territory where the ratio of men to women was the highest in the nation, this immigration argument produced the desired effect: again Blackwell's audience gave him an enthusiastic round of applause.²¹

Before launching into his next major argument, Blackwell took time out for an anecdote from his personal experience, which he was certain an audience familiar with vigilante justice would appreciate. He recalled that, as a young man he traveled on business in an area where horse stealing was a "fashionable vice," because the horse thieves were organized enough to elect a sheriff, a judge, and pack a jury. Thus when an "honest farmer" caught a thief stealing his horse, the sheriff would conveniently forget to lock the door of the jail, or if the case was brought to trial, the judge would decide in the thief's favor, and so would the jury. However, as Blackwell concluded, the farmers finally organized and hanged the thieves, with the result that stealing was no longer fashionable.²²

Having thus demonstrated the power a group could exercise when properly organized, Blackwell went on to argue for woman suffrage on the basis of women's "elevating and purifying influence." "Now it is the glory of womanhood," he said, "that women are less under the influence of great physical appetite & passion than men; they are more influenced by their convictions, by their sympathies, by their love of their associates. Women are not tempted by the gross vices to which our sex is subject. They are not tempted by the saloon, they are not tempted by the gambling house, nor the worse house." He then reminded his audience of "the condition of Helena in the early days and of every other mining camp" before the advent of women, and cited the example of California where "men were made better by women."²³

Blackwell also argued that women were more peaceable than men, reinforcing his point with a genuinely western analogy: "The male animal is the fighting animal; and it is as true of the man as of the buffalo." Moreover, he claimed that women were more temperate than men. He was on dangerous

18. *Proceedings and Debates of the Constitutional Convention Held in the City of Helena, Montana, July 4th, 1889, August 17th, 1889* (Helena: State Publishing Co., 1921), pp. 78-80.

19. Blackwell to Lucy Stone, September 2, 1890, BFP.

20. *Proceedings*, pp. 81-83.

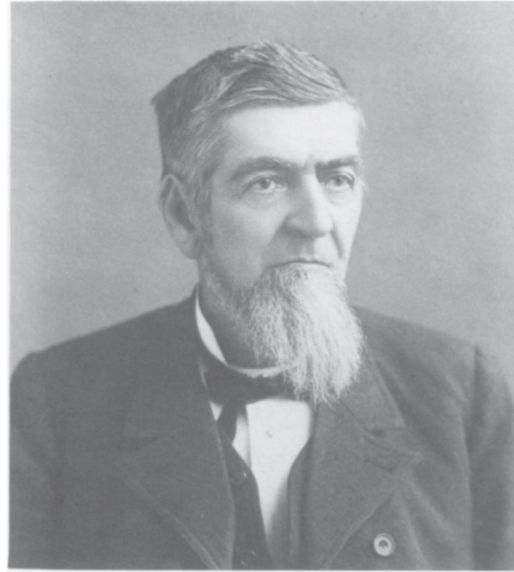
21. *Proceedings*, pp. 83-84.

22. *Proceedings*, p. 85.

23. *Proceedings*, p. 85.



Preferred letting Montana's male voters decide



Believed that women should not be kept subservient

JAMES E. CALLAWAY

WALTER BURLEIGH

ground here and he knew it, because more than a few men in the West and elsewhere in the country were opposed to woman suffrage out of the fear that it would lead to prohibition. But Blackwell decided that the best way to deal with these fears was not to ignore them, but to meet them head on. He said that he had been told by more than one man in Montana that they would not vote for woman suffrage because it would mean prohibition, and he maintained that this fear was unreasonable because prohibition was unpopular. He pointed to the example of Wyoming Territory, where women had been enfranchised but where there had been no movement towards prohibition. He was ready to admit, however, that women were in favor of temperance, adding, "I don't believe there is a man on this floor who isn't in favor of temperance."²⁴

LEAVING THE TOUCHY issue of prohibition, Blackwell asserted that women were also more chaste than men, and giving his listeners a little pat on the back, he said, "if this were not so, you would not have the pure and happy homes of Helena and of Montana." He also maintained that they were more economical and law-abiding than men, "and when we have the refining and purifying influence of women superadded to the strength and the business capacity of men, we shall have a perfect government."²⁵

Before he concluded his speech, Blackwell knew he had one final dragon to slay: the argument that women themselves did not want the vote. This he did

very adroitly by way of another personal anecdote, which again brought him laughs. He told the story of a young man named John who was too shy to propose to the girl of his choice, but when finally persuaded by Blackwell himself at least to make an attempt, he was immediately accepted by the young woman, whose name was Mary Ann. And, as Blackwell continued, "When Mary Ann here in Montana tells you she has all the rights she wants and she does not want the ballot, she has not thought about it; and if she has thought about it she is thinking of some John here in Montana that she thinks doesn't want her to vote, and she doesn't want to be irritable, and she doesn't want to lose the esteem of her male friends." Thus, according to Blackwell, it was the fault of men that women did not want the vote; and he urged his audience to do right by their Mary Anns, because the question was not simply one of woman suffrage—instead it was a question of the "amelioration of the human race."²⁶

In its report of his speech, the *Independent* observed: "Mr. Blackwell, husband of the famous Lucy Stone, is a man with silvery hair and beard, but is erect and vigorous in form and has a pleasant agreeable voice." According to the paper, Blackwell made "a powerful and able address"; and furthermore: "No cause ever had a more ardent champion than equal suffrage has in Mr. Blackwell, and his

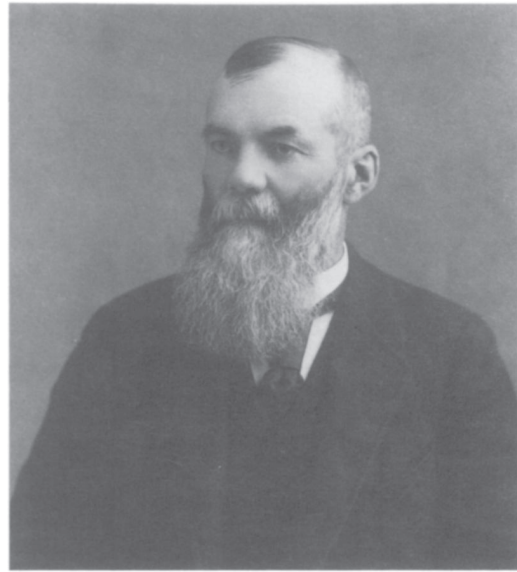
24. *Proceedings*, pp. 85-86.

25. *Proceedings*, pp. 86-87.

26. *Proceedings*, pp. 87-88.



Counted among the convention's supporters of woman suffrage



Argued that woman suffrage would undermine marriage

THOMAS H. CARTER

HENRY WHITEHILL

logical, finished remarks were listened to attentively by his audience, who warmly applauded when he had finished."²⁷

However, the editor of the paper did not agree with Blackwell that the legislature should be empowered to extend the vote to women:

The power to extend the right of suffrage is something which the people should keep in their own hands and not commit to the care of a state legislature. The interests involved are altogether too vast to be lightly esteemed or carelessly intrusted to any body of men not chosen to express the will of the people upon that one particular question. If the advocates of woman suffrage are not willing to trust the intelligence of the voters of the state, as a mass, they display a knowledge of the weakness of their cause, which should condemn it effectually. . . . The argument advanced by Mr. Blackwell, of Boston, in conversation the other day, that the expense of a campaign for equal suffrage is more than the friends of the movement can afford is not a cogent one. No great reform has ever lacked the means for carrying it out. When the public mind is prepared to accept the change there will be no difficulty in finding the means necessary to its execution. . . .²⁸

27. *Daily Independent*, July 18, 1889.

28. *Daily Independent*, July 18, 1889.

In a letter published in the *Independent* the next day, Blackwell responded to this criticism: "It is not from distrust of the people that the friends of impartial suffrage ask that the legislature be empowered hereafter, at its discretion, to extend suffrage to all qualified citizens without regard to sex. It is because a body of intelligent men, elected by the people and paid for their time, can give to this question a fuller and more careful consideration than can be otherwise attained." But the editor of the *Independent* remained unconvinced, and so the matter rested until it came under discussion at the convention a week after Blackwell had delivered his address. On the eve of his departure from Helena, Lucy Stone wrote encouragingly: "It is a great thing you have in hand. Not in our lifetime will there be such a chance to help secure equal rights." Striking a purely human note, she added that she could not bear to think of him as having gone past Yellowstone Park without seeing it.²⁹

By July 22, Blackwell was in Olympia, Washington. There he found the same opposition to suffrage because of its apparent connection with prohibition, and reflecting back on the situation in Montana, he wrote: "Think of urging Prohibition for instance in Helena where every other house is a saloon, a licensed gambling house, or a house of prostitution—where stores, mines, & all forms of work know no Sunday. Mr & Mrs McAdow tried to stop their mine works on Sunday. The miners protested &

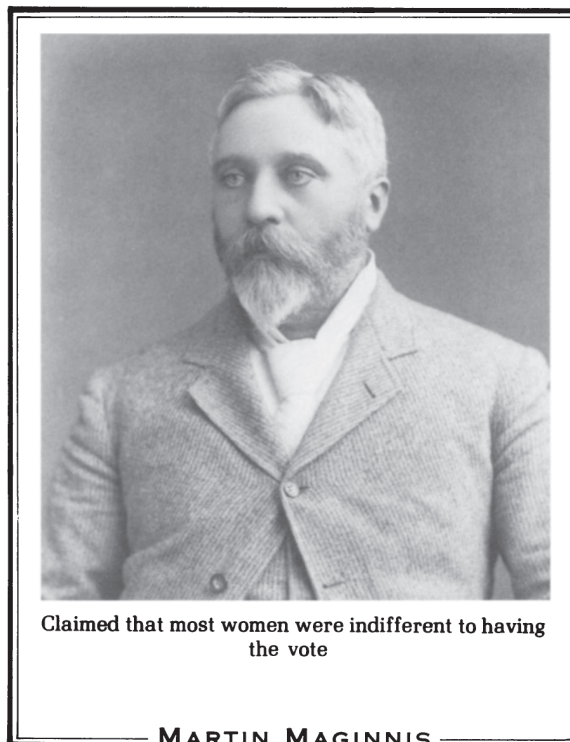
29. Blackwell to Editor, as published in *Daily Independent*, July 19, 1889; Lucy Stone to Blackwell, July 18, 1889, BFP.

on Sunday went off for a general drunk and did not get back to work till the following Thursday—so the Sunday [closing] had to be abandoned as *demoralizing!*” Blackwell’s statements about the free-wheeling atmosphere of Helena were borne out by the *Independent*; in the issue of July 19, immediately under his letter to the editor urging the empowering of the legislature, had appeared an item entitled “Your Wife as Bartender,” the gist of which was that instead of going to saloons for his drinking, a man should buy a gallon of whiskey and make his wife the bartender, paying her the price of his drinks, and thereby enabling her to “bury him in a decent manner and live herself upon the income after his death.”³⁰

ON JULY 25, the Montana convention devoted an entire day to discussing the question of whether or not the legislature should be empowered to extend the vote to women. The majority of those who spoke were in favor of the provision; a few dissenting voices, however, made themselves heard. James E. Callaway, a Republican lawyer from Madison County, expressed his preference for submitting the question to the voters as a separate amendment, because he believed that otherwise the constitution might be endangered. And while he thought women should vote, he felt they should be excluded from public office, because if they were not, his own wife might take it into her head to run for governor, and he did not relish the idea of being referred to as the husband of the governor. Henry R. Whitehill, a lawyer and Republican delegate from Deer Lodge County, said he was opposed to women’s voting, because in his view, it would undermine the marriage relationship. But by far the lengthiest and most telling argument against suffrage came from former territorial delegate Martin Maginnis. Citing female indifference, he produced statistics that would have been embarrassing to Blackwell had the two been engaged in a one-on-one debate on the question. In Blackwell’s home state of Massachusetts, Maginnis pointed out, there were 486,300 women eligible to vote, but after school suffrage was granted women in 1879, only 4,219 bothered to register, and only 1,911 actually voted. Moreover, Maginnis feared that those women who did go to the polls would be guided by ministers, and then they would end up with what he considered the worst kind of government—a theocracy. Quoting a fellow soldier during the Civil War, he said, “the devil moved the preachers, and the preachers moved the women, and the women got the men into this unfortunate and unholy war.”³¹

30. Blackwell to Lucy Stone, July 22, 1889, BFP: *Daily Independent*, July 19, 1889.

31. *Proceedings*, pp. 364-366, 371-372.



Claimed that most women were indifferent to having the vote

MARTIN MAGINNIS

Walter A. Burleigh, a lawyer and Republican from Custer County answered Maginnis’ argument that women should remain in a subservient position by claiming that this was “the same doctrine that is enunciated by the Sioux Indians and the Blackfoot and the Flatheads today when they take their squaws and work them for their own purpose.” Finally, William A. Clark, president of the convention, admitted that he did not know if women really wanted the vote, but when they did make their wish for suffrage known, he thought the legislature should have the power to extend it to them. At least women, unlike men, he averred, would not sell their votes.³²

But in the end, the “antis” carried the day; on July 31, Blackwell reported to his wife: “The Oregonian of this date gives us bad news from Montana, tho it is really better than I expected—viz. a defeat by a tie vote 33 to 33. It is possible that had I remained there, the missing vote might have been had, but to spread myself over three Conventions sitting at [the] same time hundreds of miles apart is not easy.” On August 12, a proposal to submit the question separately to the voters was also defeated by a tie vote, but the Montana constitution did grant women school suffrage—which the territorial legislature had conferred upon them in 1887—and it gave all tax-paying women a vote on questions concerning taxpayers.³³

By August 15, Blackwell had returned to Massachusetts, where he wrote a letter of thanks to

32. *Proceedings*, pp. 372-374.

33. Blackwell to Lucy Stone, July 31, 1889, BFP: *Proceedings*, pp. 855-856.

the McAdows. "You have made a brave and persistent fight and deserve to succeed," he said. He asked them to send a full report to *The Woman's Journal* "with the names of the men who spoke and voted for and against woman suffrage in all its forms," adding, "I hope Mr. Jos. K. Toole voted with us & that President Clark stood firm on our side." In closing, he wrote: "I often think of you both, & of the courage Mr McAdow has shown in climbing those stairs to the Convention."³⁴

ALTHOUGH HE HAD failed in his mission to North Dakota, Montana and Washington, Blackwell did succeed in stirring up pro-suffrage sentiment among Montana women; in January of 1890, the state's first suffrage club was organized in Helena. And when he, along with Susan B. Anthony and other Eastern suffragists, undertook an amendment campaign in South Dakota the following fall, his hostess in Montana, Clara L. McAdow, was among those who contributed financial support to the campaign.

Three years later, in 1893, Blackwell had hopes of participating in another campaign in Colorado, the state he had found to be so similar to Montana. To his wife, who was away speaking at suffrage meetings held in conjunction with the World's Columbian Exposition at Chicago, he wrote: "I wish that you & I could spend the summer there together, making our headquarters at Denver." But it was not to be; during the summer Lucy Stone became seriously ill, and she died on October 18, 1893. Her husband survived her by sixteen years. He remained active in the suffrage movement, although he did not take part in any further state campaigns in the West or elsewhere. He did travel to Portland, Oregon, in 1905 with his daughter for the first national suffrage convention held on the West Coast, and in 1909 he returned to the West—this time to Seattle—for another national suffrage convention, which was his last. In the late summer of 1909 he caught a severe cold, and on September 7, he died.³⁵

After his death Henry B. Blackwell was hailed as "the first and only man" in America "to devote himself primarily to the cause of woman's enfranchisement." Although the Helena papers did not carry his obituary, the state as a whole later paid tribute to him in a way that he certainly would have appreciated: on November 3, 1914, Montana voted to enfranchise its women.³⁶ ❧

34. Blackwell to Mr. and Mrs. McAdow, August 15, 1889, BFP.

35. Blackwell to Lucy Stone, May 21, 1893, BFP.

36. Francis J. Garrison, address delivered at Blackwell Memorial meeting, 1909, reprinted in *The Woman's Journal*, November 20, 1909. The key word is "primarily," because many men had devoted themselves to the suffrage movement.



Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College

Alice Stone Blackwell with her parents, in a detail from a group photograph

THE FAMILY

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