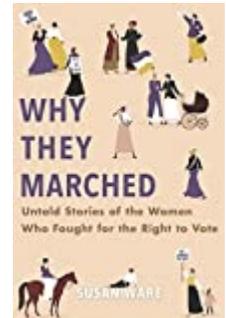


Susan Ware. *Why They Marched: Untold Stories of the Women Who Fought for the Right to Vote.* Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2019. viii + 345 pp. \$26.95, cloth, ISBN 978-0-674-98668-8.



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Susan Ware's *Why They Marched: Untold Stories of the Women Who Fought for the Right to Vote* is a material history of the suffrage movement which uses selected items to tell “discrete but overlapping biographical stories” (p. 4). As this work is a kind of love letter to the Schlesinger Library, nearly all of the items come from its collection. Ware argues that “biography captures the power and passion of [individuals]; material culture helps make the stories even more real” (p. 285). She uses each item of material culture to launch into a mini-biography of understudied figures that adds to the reader’s understanding of the suffrage movement. For example, Ware uses cartes de visite (a form of photography), a death mask, and a saddle bag and sash to tell the stories of Sojourner Truth, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Claiborne Catlin, respectively. It is a wonderful use of material history, which students will find engaging and entertaining.

The book is divided into three sections. The first covers suffrage roughly from the aftermath of the Civil War through the early twentieth century;

the second looks to how suffrage personally shaped women’s lives and relationships; and the third covers the final push for the Susan B. Anthony Amendment. The book focuses on nineteen items in honor of the Nineteenth Amendment. As a result, each chapter is relatively short. While the entire text could certainly be used in undergraduate courses, assigning individual chapters may prove useful as well.

The book offers incredibly diverse coverage of the suffrage movement. Ware devotes a chapter each to Black suffragists Sojourner Truth and March Church Terrell. She covers international suffrage work with Terrell as well as in a chapter on Alice Stone Blackwell’s activism. Working-class suffragists are represented in a chapter on Rose Schneiderman and the Equality League of Self-Supporting Women. Even anti-suffragists are included in a chapter on the Nathan sisters, one of whom was a suffragist and the other an anti-suffragist. Male suffragists are also covered in a chapter on Ray Brown, husband of New York Woman Suffrage Association President Gertrude Foster Brown, and

Mormon women are included in a chapter on Emeline Wells.

Further, in chapters that focus on the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) and the National Woman's Party (NWP), it would have been easy to focus primarily on Carrie Chapman Catt and Alice Paul. However, Ware chooses to direct attention to Hazel Hunkins and Maud Wood Park, while still including Catt and Paul of course. (The author appears to be more of a fan of Paul than of Catt.) The final three chapters do a particularly good job of analyzing the passage and ratification of the Anthony Amendment. The work closes with a chapter on the NWP, a chapter on NAWSA's Front Door Lobby, and a final chapter where both organizations and their tactics take part in the ratification campaign in Tennessee.

Although Ware attempts to include the West and South, the geographic coverage of the book still tilts heavily to the Northeast in part because of the source base and in part because of the suffrage movement itself. Her effort to include regions outside of the Northeast is clear in how thin some of the connections are between the objects and subjects chosen. For example, chapter 6, "The Shadow of the Confederacy," begins with a badge belonging to former Confederate soldier Alexander Green Beauchamp of Mississippi. However, the chapter focuses on Mary Johnston of Virginia and has little to do with the item introduced at its start.

Sometimes the material items hold surprises. In a chapter on suffragists in the western United States, Ware begins with a suffrage cookbook, in the vein of other charity cookbooks of the era. However, this one was written by mountaineering suffragists and the recipe for trout begins with "First catch your trout" (p. 182). Ware also details a suffrage pennant that these mountaineers placed in a crater on Ruth Mountain when they could not make it to the summit due to weather. She notes that if they had returned with the pennant or a photograph of the pennant on the summit, that such an item would have been included in this

book and calls it "a reminder of the serendipity that allows some objects to survive and others to disappear forever" (p. 187).

Like any text covering such a vast span of time and space, there are some issues. Several times throughout the work, Ware equates citizenship with suffrage, though she notes that the courts found a clear distinction between the two. Still, Ware argues that "once the 19th Amendment passed, activists claimed a new moniker—that of woman citizens. The sustained activism of suffragists-turned-woman-citizens provides the clearest answer to why suffrage mattered" (p. 281). However, as several states allowed non-citizens to vote in 1920 and large groups of citizens remained disfranchised, a more nuanced approach to citizenship and its relation to voting rights is needed. Ware's "Bread and Roses" chapter on Rose Schneiderman would have been a good place to discuss the disconnect between citizenship and voting rights further. She begins the chapter with a stat: "in 1910, approximately 15 percent of the American population was foreign-born" and ends with Schneiderman pursuing naturalization in 1916 in anticipation of woman suffrage (p. 209). A brief explanation of the fact that citizenship did not guarantee voting rights and that several states did not limit voting to citizens would have been useful.

While Ware devotes a chapter to life partners Molly Dewson and Polly Porter, I found the disparity between the directness with which Ware approached heterosexual relationships, be they marriages or affairs, and the opaque word choice around homosexuality throughout the book to be frustrating. Ware even mentions the Henry James play *The Bostonians* (1896) without mentioning Boston marriages. While queering the movement should be about more than identifying same-sex relationships, I found the indirect language lacking.

These issues aside, *Why They Marched* is a thoroughly researched and fascinating read on a diverse suffrage movement that will help spur in-

terest in the movement well after the Anthony Amendment's centennial year. Both those new to suffrage history and those incredibly familiar with it will find new and intriguing stories in Ware's work.

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