

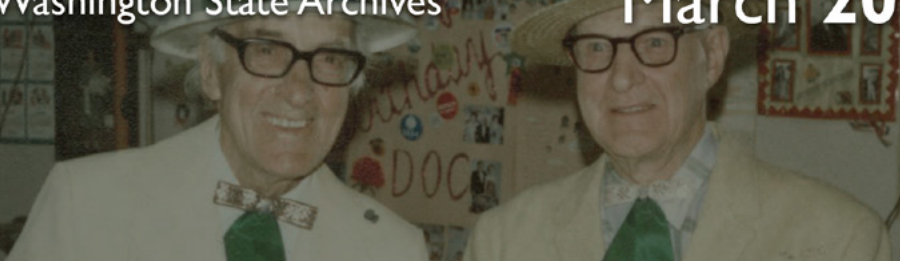
Out of the Archives

a newsletter from the Washington State Archives

March 2018



Office of the Secretary of State



Washington women were allowed to vote in the 1880s

by Patrick Williams, Imaging Services Manager

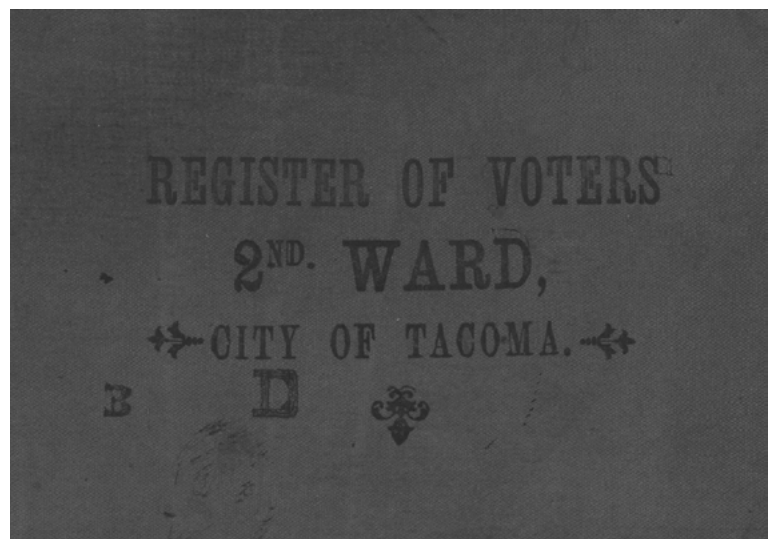
The Washington Territorial Legislature passed an act on November 23, 1883, to amend the voting rights of its citizens to include:

"...Sec. 2 Wherever the word "his" occurs in the chapter aforesaid, it shall be construed to mean "his or her," as the case may be."

The language provided women the right to vote — until the act was overturned in 1887 when the Territorial Supreme Court deemed female voters and jurors illegal in Harland v. Territory of Washington.

This Register of Voters from the City of Tacoma shows a variety of women in the Puget Sound taking part in this amazing opportunity, including nurses, housekeepers, teachers, principals, saleswomen, dressmakers and wives.

The collection was digitized through a National Historical Publications and Records Committee (NHPRC) grant.



[City of Tacoma, Voter Registration, 1885-1889, Tacoma Public Library, Tacoma, WA.](#)

The indexing was accomplished by Eastern Washington University interns, with the help of volunteers using [SCRIBE](#), the crowdsourcing online software that Archives' volunteers access from home. Additional information included in this register includes: place of nativity, age, occupation, local residence, file intentions, and date of registration.
