

Out of the Archives

a newsletter from the Washington State Archives

November 2016



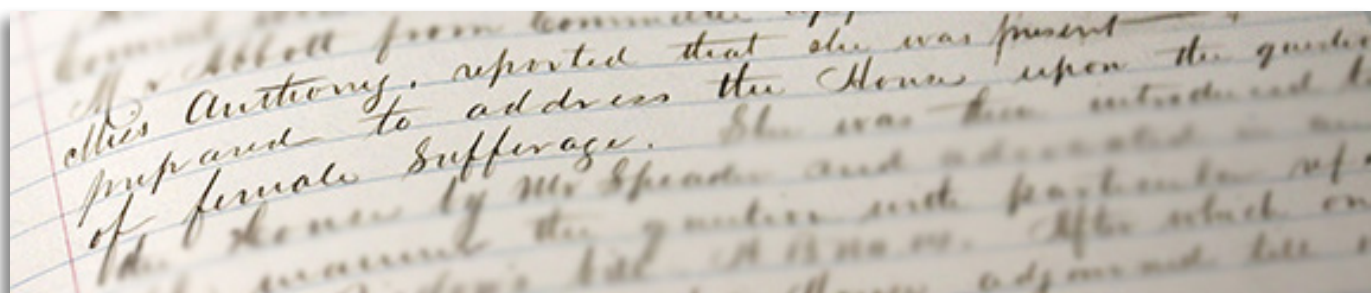
Susan B. Anthony herself, and the Bush family fought for women's rights in Washington

by Dr. Jewell Lorenz Dunn, Olympia Branch Researcher

The Southwest branch of the Washington State Archives recently obtained several early General Election poll books for the South Union precinct in Thurston County, Washington, covering the years 1912-1928.ⁱ Among the collections received was a General Election poll book for 1912. John S. Bush was the Oath of Inspector of Elections for the South Union precinct. John was the grandson of New Market (now Tumwater) pioneers George and Isabella Bush. These poll books give an overview of who was living in the area and who proceeded to exercise their right to vote.

POLL LIST						
Of an Election held in <u>South Union</u>						
NAME OF CITY, TOWN OR PRECINCT						
in <u>Thurston</u> County, State of Washington, on the 5th day of						
November, A. D. 1912, at which time <u>John S. Bush</u> was Inspector and						
<u>C. H. Clough</u> and <u>Fred Schulze</u>						
were Judges and <u>William J. West</u> and <u>J. M. Warner</u>						
were Clerks of said Election, the following named persons voting thereat:						
No. of person voting	NAMES OF VOTERS	No. of Ballot Given to Voter	Write "Voted" in this Column	No. of Person Voting	NAMES OF VOTERS	No. of Ballot Given to Voter
1	<u>A. T. Burdick</u>	1	<u>Voted</u>	34	<u>Charles Dickerson</u>	34
2	<u>W. J. Abbott</u>	2	<u>Voted</u>	35	<u>Mrs. J. P. O. Omal</u>	35
3	<u>W. K. Meston</u>	3	<u>Voted</u>	36	<u>Mrs. E. W. Jenkins</u>	36
4	<u>Joe Shelley</u>	4	<u>Voted</u>	37	<u>Mrs. N. B. Signell</u>	37
5	<u>W. E. Lewis</u>	5	<u>Voted</u>	38	<u>Mrs. E. A. Lewis</u>	38

The General Election vote was taken on November 5, 1912. One can find it interesting there were 66 women voters out of the 193 total voters in the area in November of 1912. Having women as one-third of registered voters was a huge accomplishment for the time. Although women would not receive the right to vote nationally until years later, Washington state was progressive in the fight for the woman's right to vote.ⁱⁱ Washington was the fifth state to allow women to vote with a bill introduced in 1909 and passed in 1910.ⁱⁱⁱ



The struggle to approve the woman's right to vote in Washington began much earlier when Susan B. Anthony came to Washington. Miss Anthony was permitted to address the Washington Territorial House of Representatives on female suffrage, October 19, 1871. The Honorable Daniel R. Bigelow had addressed the House just a few days before on the same topic.^{iv} [Check out the Washington State Secretary of State's timeline of voting rights for women.](#)

For more information on the women's suffrage movement in Washington state [see Shanna Stevenson's articles and books covering the subject](#). Shanna was the coordinator of the Women's History Consortium.

i. General Election Poll book 1912-1928, Lewis and Verla Paine Collection of Bush memorabilia, Washington State Archives, SW20150903-01

ii. Stevenson, Shanna (2010) *The Fight for Washington Women's Suffrage: A Brief History*. Washington State Historical Society web site.

iii. House bill 59 (HB59) introduced during the session of the 1909 Legislature and which authorized the constitutional amendment vote on women's suffrage held the 8th of November 1910.

iv. Bigelow, Daniel R. (1871, October 14) *Speech on Female Suffrage*. Washington State Library. A60002 398843.

v. Stevenson, Shanna (2009) *Woman's Voices, Women's Votes: The Campaign for Equal Rights in Washington*. CA: University of California Press.

Correction to previous article: In October's edition of *Out of the Archives*, the article, "Nobody Knows What George Bush Actually Looked Like," used the term, "West Indies" where it should have said, "India," referring to the country, not the group of islands.