

“The Women’s Suffrage Campaign”

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My name is Selia Elizabeth Barnes. I was born on April 9, 1900 in West Palm Beach, Florida. It is now 1918. I just graduated from high school and unhappily realized that the boys in my class, who also just turned 18, are allowed to vote but I am not, just because I am a girl. I learned that there are many women around the world trying to change the laws and allow women to vote and hold elected office. They work in a campaign called the "Women's Suffrage." I began to dig deeper and learn more about this movement.

As I started researching, I found a newspaper from a year ago and this was the headline, "33 Courageous Suffragists Protesting Outside of the White House Beaten Terribly and Throw in Jail." The newspaper explained that the women protested in front of the White House and later were taken away to jail. President Woodrow Wilson, while running for office, supported giving the women their right to vote, but when he became President, he changed his tune. The women were outraged. The women screamed and yelled for hours trying to get their rights and became more and more disruptive. Officials took many women to jail, where the protests continued, but in different way. The women went on a hunger strike which means you refuse to eat even if you may die. They became weak, some became ill, with their bodies wilting away. Their captors resorted to force feeding them, to keep them from dying. They also were beaten terribly with metal. This all happened at the Occoquan Workhouse, which was a jail.

The entire ordeal caused President Wilson to worry about the negative publicity. I decided to research the women that were taken to jail to learn more about their backgrounds.

The first protester is Alice Paul. She is the leader of the Silent Sentinels. The Silent Sentinels are a group of women in favor of women's suffrage. Alice Paul's very close friend is named Lucy Burns. She also protested in front of the White House and was put in jail. In the Occoquan Workhouse Lucy was handcuffed with hands above her head and was held there the entire night. When the women were let go Lucy wasn't and was deported to a different jail. She spent most of her life in jail but helped a lot in women's suffrage.

My favorite abolitionist is Susan B. Anthony. She is a very important help to the women's suffrage unit. She was born into a Quaker family, which means members of a Christian group of religious movements. She collected slavery petitions at the age of 17.

All of this chaos made me think of helping out in the campaign, so I started my own society to help women's rights. It's called "Women's Rights For Life." I believe that this will help a great deal in the women's rights. We held many of our own protests for two years right in front of City Hall in downtown West Palm Beach, Florida, demanding our rights. Finally, on August 8, 1920 the 19th Amendment was

passed and we got our right to vote and hold elected office. Many women died and suffered, but the fight for our rights was worth it!

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