

The Arizona Equal Campaign Suffrage Committee
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The women of the Arizona Equal Suffrage Campaign Committee worked harder than ever in the months before the state-wide November 5, 1912 election.. They wrote letters, spoke to groups and passed out handbills urging the male population to enfranchise Arizona women. Using some of the same arguments that the American colonists used in their fight to break away from England during the Revolutionary War, Arizona's suffragettes claimed that taxation without representation was wrong and that as taxpayers who supported government they should have the right to be represented in their legislature. They also pointed out that women had worked as hard as men in developing and building up the Territory and newly created state. It was time to move forward.

This effort was the culmination of nearly twenty-one years of campaigning in Arizona for the right to vote. Women first joined the campaign for suffrage in Arizona under the leadership of Josephine Brawley Hughes in 1891 when she resigned as the President of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) to establish a suffrage organization. She said, "Let us secure the vote for women first, then the victory for home and temperance will soon follow." Josephine and her husband were both radical reformers and used their newspaper, the *Arizona Daily Star*, to promote temperance and suffrage. With the aid of Laura M. Johns, a member of the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA), Hughes lobbied the 1891 Constitutional Convention to include female suffrage in the constitution. Despite the women's best efforts, female suffrage was not incorporated.

In 1900, Pauline O'Neill, the widow of Buckey O'Neill of Rough Rider fame, took over the work of the Suffrage Committee. The committee suffered a bitter defeat in 1903 when both the House and Council passed a suffrage bill, only to have the governor veto it. O'Neill was followed in 1909 by Frances W. Munds who revitalized the organization and with the help of the (NAWSA) set up organizations in Arizona's cities and small towns. The statewide organization was now known as the Arizona Equal Suffrage Association. Speakers criss-crossed the state seeking audiences and rallying support.

They had thought they would be successful at getting women's suffrage included in the 1910 Constitution, but as Francis Munds pointed out, "We labored long and well with that Convention, but it was useless, for we soon found that although the majority was labeled 'Progressive' that only a few were the genuine article, and that only a thin veneer, just enough to deceive the people, covered the greater number..." Once Arizona received statehood and the first statewide election was held in 1912, Munds recalled, "We commenced bombarding the governor with petitions and letters asking him to recommend suffrage in his message to the legislature." Although Governor Hunt did promote it in his message, the legislature again failed to give women the vote. This defeat galvanized the women of the Equal Suffrage Association.

They had six weeks to circulate suffrage petitions statewide to obtain the 3,342 signatures required by law to get the initiative on the November ballot. In a September 1912 letter to

Caroline J. Reilly, of the National Suffrage group, Frances Willard Munds wrote, "Our campaign is coming along nicely, and every day some one comes forward with some offer of assistance. Sometimes it is a hard-working woman who comes and gives her mite and tells me how much she hopes for success and then it is some smooth politician who sees which way the wind is blowing and he tells me he is ready to speak at all times for our amendment." In the November election of 1912, sixty-eight percent of the state's voters supported suffrage. At long last, Arizona women could vote in elections and run for office. In 1914, suffragist Frances W. Munds was elected a Senator to the state legislature from Yavapai County, the first woman in Arizona to hold this office.