

ADDING “A LITTLE SUFFRAGE SPICE  
TO THE MELTING POT”

# MINNESOTA’S

## Scandinavian Woman Suffrage Association

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**O**N THE LAST DAY OF FEBRUARY IN 1917 MORE than 1,000 people gathered at Central High School’s auditorium in St. Paul to partake in an evening of Scandinavian culture. The audience was privy to three distinct performances: a Swedish play, a Norwegian “playlet,” and the much-anticipated carnival scene, which showcased international dances. Attendees raved about how meticulously organized and delightful the evening had been and how thoroughly they enjoyed the display of

Scandinavian regalia, songs, and dances.<sup>1</sup> To an outsider, this event might have seemed a quaint ethnic demonstration. Few would have guessed that the entertainment was a fundraiser for a women’s suffrage organization.

In fact, the Scandinavian Woman Suffrage Association (SWSA) often drew upon cultural connections to its ethnic community in order to support its political activities. Started as an auxiliary to the statewide Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association, the SWSA sought to appeal



to the state's substantial Scandinavian population. The group used its unique position within this suffrage framework to diversify the movement's base and nurture non-Anglo political and financial contacts.

Membership in the SWSA was limited to first- and second-generation Scandinavian Americans, and all who met that criterion were accepted. While a number of the members were wives of prominent Scandinavian American men in the Twin Cities, married women from working-class backgrounds as well as single working women also joined. The SWSA's policy of not charging dues most likely accounted for this socio-economic diversity and solidified its reputation as a club of hard-working women. Men, although not the main targets of recruitment efforts, were allowed to join, and the husbands and children of a few of the female members were also on the membership list. The SWSA's limited male membership reflects the organization's emphasis on establishing a community of like-minded women.<sup>2</sup>

The history of the SWSA shows how political activists utilized their cultural heritage to elicit support for women's suffrage. Close examination of the club's membership and activities helps explain why the organization remained steadfast in its ethnic identification even when confronted with vehement assimilationist rhetoric during World War I. The story also reveals the complexities of the American women's suffrage movement at the local, state, and national level.

*FACING: Members of the Scandinavian Woman Suffrage Association parading in Minneapolis on national Suffrage Red Letter Day, May 1914*

**A**LTHOUGH THE TWIN CITIES had many suffrage clubs in the early twentieth century, including the Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association (MWSA) and the Political Equality Club (PEC), the SWSA stood out as the only ethnic organization in the area. Dr. Ethel Hurd, a mainstay of many Minnesota suffrage clubs, helped form the SWSA in 1907 to take advantage of the potential lobbying power this club would have in the heavily Scandinavian state. According to Nanny Mattson Jaeger, a later president of the SWSA, the club "serve[d] as a sort of special committee in the general suffrage work," augmenting the activities of other organizations through its appeal to ethnic heritage.<sup>3</sup>

## Norwegian and Swedish Americans often put aside their Old Country rivalries in an effort to access greater political power.

Early suffrage successes in the Scandinavian countries bolstered the SWSA's status. Activists in Norway enjoyed a major triumph in 1907 when tax-paying women obtained full suffrage. In fact, all of the Scandinavian nations at the time had progressed farther on the issue of women's suffrage than the United States. As a result, members of the SWSA saw themselves as having "a peculiar prestige" among suffrage clubs, and the group drew upon successes in Norway, Denmark, and Sweden throughout its existence.<sup>4</sup> In turn, local and national suffrage organizations recognized the benefits of being allied to the SWSA. The perceived ties between Scandinavian American suffragists and the effective movements in their homelands contributed to the SWSA's reputa-

tion as a valuable part of Minnesota's women's suffrage network.

In the United States, immigrants from the Scandinavian countries often found it useful to band together, especially in political organizations. Norwegians, Swedes, and Danes formed groups across national lines and used the term Scandinavian to signal the boundaries of their inclusiveness and exclusiveness. In that sense, "Scandinavian" was an ethnicity created to serve a purpose, a process historians and anthropologists have documented among many groups in the U.S.<sup>5</sup> This did not mean that Scandinavians abandoned their national ties. Norwegian nationalism, in particular, soared when the Norwegian-Swedish union

dissolved in 1905, after nearly 100 years, and the two countries were officially recognized as separate nation states. Yet in the United States, Norwegian and Swedish Americans often put aside their Old Country rivalries in an effort to access greater political power. This was especially true in urban areas where Scandinavian Americans were an ethnic minority.

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In a metropolitan area like Minneapolis/St. Paul, forming a pan-Scandinavian suffrage club had distinct political advantages. When combined, Scandinavians made up the largest immigrant group in Minnesota, surpassing Germans by hundreds of thousands. Thus, a united Scandinavian organization would have a larger membership roster than individual nationality clubs and might achieve greater political power. Besides, many people outside the Scandinavian milieu associated Norwegians, Swedes, and Danes with one another. Their similar languages, customs, and histories led many Americans to act as if the three nationalities were interchangeable.<sup>6</sup> The consolidated Scandinavian suffrage association took advantage of this misconception to create a stronger interest group.

### Ethnic groups often argued for acceptance into American society based on their “unique” and “natural” characteristics.

Despite the Scandinavian umbrella, the nationality of the SWSA's leaders shaped its membership and program. Under its first president (1907–13), Norwegian-born Jenova Martin, the group's activities reflected her close ties to the Norwegian American community. From the SWSA's early days, Martin clearly separated its work from that of other Minnesota suffrage organizations by emphasizing the club's ethnicity. Over the years, she capitalized on this identity by holding Norwegian cultural events (an evening of entertainment in 1910 that included the Norwegian Dramatic Society performing *King Haakon the Seventh*, for example), lobbying legislators,

and even traveling to North Dakota to deliver a suffrage speech in her native language.<sup>7</sup>

After Martin stepped down, the organization's membership shifted. Her successor, Nanny Mattson Jaeger (who served until the vote was won in 1920), was a Swedish American married to a Norwegian American newspaper publisher. Her heritage attracted a large number of Swedish Americans, which ultimately affected the club's membership and activities. Although her reputation as a prominent Swedish American may have altered the composition of the club's membership and introduced Swedish performers and celebrations into fundraising events, Jaeger herself was an ardent assimilationist. Still, she used ethnic heritage as a strategy for achieving the most important part of citizenry for all women: the right

to vote. She believed that the democratic process would allow for greater assimilation into American society. Thus, women's suffrage was inevitably linked to the process of Americanization, and ethnicity was a means to achieve enfranchisement.<sup>8</sup>

**E**THNIC GROUPS OFTEN ARGUED for acceptance into American society based on their “unique” and “natural” characteristics. Both suffragists and anti-suffragists drew upon this framework and claimed that different ethnic groups either supported or opposed women's right to vote based on their heritage. Anglo American middle-class women were

frequently portrayed as the backbone of the suffrage movement, while Irish and German Americans were presumed to be ethnically opposed.<sup>9</sup>

Suffragists often employed these stereotypes to highlight the foolishness of ethnic opposition to the cause. In 1882 Julia B. Nelson, an Anglo American married to a Norwegian American and a known suffragist and temperance activist, wrote a poem that the SWSA utilized throughout its existence to ridicule the antagonism of certain immigrant groups toward equality for women. The poem referred to a farmer, Hans Dunderkopf (Hans Stupidhead) and his contradictory view of women's rights. Dunderkopf believed that women definitely had the right to equality when it came to sharing farm work (a practice that Anglo Americans abhorred) but could not see why this right should apply to voting. He was appalled at the idea of his wife becoming a “man” and shouldering the responsibilities that came with that status. This type of suffragist propaganda aimed to portray certain ethnic groups as anti-democracy and thus, un-American. The SWSA juxtaposed these stereotypes with claims that Scandinavian Americans were innately committed to the American ideals of democracy and equality.<sup>10</sup>

Scandinavians do appear to have been more likely than other ethnic groups to support suffrage. According to political scientists Eileen L. McDonough and H. Douglas Price, more Scandinavian American men voted in favor of enfranchising women than did any other ethnic group in the Midwest. This support, however, was not universal. For example, when Jaeger reported on the activities of the SWSA at the Minnesota Woman Suffrage Convention in 1915, she added some nuance to



LEFT: Nanny Mattson Jaeger, a voice of the Scandinavian Woman Suffrage Association, about 1915. RIGHT: Ethel E. Hurd, who campaigned for suffrage and chronicled the local movement.

the picture: Scandinavian Americans who left their native lands before suffrage movements had taken hold or who lost contact with their homeland needed as much convincing of the benefits of women's suffrage as non-Scandinavians. This statement only reinforced the need for an organization like the SWSA.<sup>11</sup>

Jaeger's report also demonstrated that shame was an ongoing rhetorical tool that the SWSA employed to convince Scandinavian Americans to support women's suffrage. In 1913, the year that Martin's tenure ended, she blundered when she told the *Minneapolis Tribune* that Scandinavian women in Minneapolis "had no interest in woman suffrage" because "Scandinavians in this country have been so busy making money that they are 50 years behind the times." While Martin probably was trying to motivate Scandinavians to support the SWSA, her strategy must have backfired because she retracted her statement with a mollifying explanation two days later.<sup>12</sup>

The SWSA's surviving membership-enrollment cards re-

flect the endurance of this rhetorical device. While the 178 cards found in Nanny Mattson Jaeger's papers are not dated, they probably were collected during her tenure as president. Printed above the signature line was a statement intended both to rally and shame new members into action: "Scandinavian women are quite often accused of being indifferent as to their responsibility in securing the ballot. Perhaps this is true and it is up to us to find out if this is a fact. However, if you are ever so interested, it will not be very effective unless you give your name for moral support."<sup>13</sup> Coasting along on suffrage victories in the Old Country was not enough. If women wanted to prove that Scandinavian Americans supported suffrage, they would have to join the fight officially.

**M**OST SCHOLARSHIP ON American women's suffrage organizations not only highlights Anglo American efforts but also tends to focus on the movement's middle- and upper-class leaders.

Cross-referencing the SWSA's membership cards with census data provides a more complete picture of Minnesota's suffragists. Unfortunately, not all of the members appear in the 1910 or 1920 Minnesota census; nevertheless, sources on the 125 traceable members reveal that Scandinavian American women and men from a range of economic and household situations signed up to support enfranchisement. Single working women and married women with as many as eight children joined; husbands' occupations ranged from bricklayer to salesman and publisher.

The membership of the SWSA embodied the pro-suffrage assertion that supporters were typical American women with family and budgetary concerns. This claim countered the anti-suffragist portrayal of suffragists as upper-class society women whose personal situations did not and could not represent the majority of American women's needs and desires. For example, in 1915 the Minnesota Anti-Suffrage Association alleged that suffragists were not mothers but "idle, brainless society women." Ethel Hurd of the PEC contested this view, documenting the number of suffrage-club members in the Twin Cities who worked inside and outside of the home. She pointed to the SWSA as an example of a club "almost entirely composed of practical housekeepers and mothers." Census records bear her out: In 1910 nearly half of the SWSA's traceable members had underage children living at home, and the majority of them did not have live-in servants.<sup>14</sup>

Norwegian Americans and Swedish Americans represented more than 87 percent of the traceable members. Only two were Danish Americans, perhaps because of the

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Danes' greater propensity to assimilate or their proportionally smaller population in the Twin Cities. There was one Finnish American member, no doubt a sign of the mutual perception that Finns were not Scandinavian. It appears that the SWSA was attractive both to immigrants with fresh Old Country ties and to more assimilated Scandinavians who had been exposed to the American educational and political system: 69 of the members were first generation, while 49 were second generation.<sup>15</sup>

Besides adding an ethnic dimension to Minnesota's suffrage movement, the SWSA also brought age diversity to the cause. Contrary to popular perception, younger women—often faced with household responsibilities quite different from those of older women or single working women—were a significant part of SWSA membership. In 1910 the average age of members was just over 32. Nearly half of these women had children under the age of 18 living at home; five of them had more than five minor children. When the women's suffrage movement culminated in 1920, the majority of the SWSA's members were under the age of 40.<sup>16</sup> Thus, the maxim that domestic responsibilities limited women's participation in suffrage work does not seem to apply to the SWSA. It is not clear why young mothers joined the club. It probably appealed to many as an inexpensive way to socialize with a community of women while maintaining ethnic heritage and participating in American political life.

While some Scandinavian American men joined the SWSA (12 membership cards exist), they did not hold leadership positions. Most of them had Swedish American backgrounds; two were second-generation Norwegian Americans. Only three had wives who were members of the club.<sup>17</sup>

The SWSA's lack of dues may have encouraged or allowed poorer women to join the club. Again, census records reveal information that challenges common assumptions about suffrage supporters. Since most of the married female members are classified as "housewife," it is the husband's occupation that indicates a family's economic situation. The census recognized 12 occupations; closely clustered as the SWSA's top job categories were skilled tradesman, professional, and merchant (in that order), but almost as many members were married to laborers.<sup>18</sup>

Unfortunately, the women married to working-class men do not have much of a historical voice beyond the quantitative data. There is, in general, considerably more information about the middle- or upper-class women who assumed leadership positions in most organizations. Even so, little is known about the presidents and officers of the SWSA. There were many members, however, who formed a sort of cultural leadership for the club. These women, including Laura Bratager, Mary Tingdale, and Helen Egilsrud, came from prominent families of artists, poets and writers. Their role in shaping the Scandinavian cultural community included

membership in other ethnic clubs, such as the Lyngblomsten Literary Society.<sup>19</sup> As the elite of the Twin Cities Scandinavian American community, these women formed networks with others who had ties outside of the SWSA. These relationships further broadened the reach of the ethnic suffrage club.

**T**HE SWSA UTILIZED ITS leaders' prominence within the Scandinavian community to lobby for support from all levels of Minnesota's Scandinavian American population. As Jaeger asserted, using ethnicity to further the American women's suffrage movement injected "a little suffrage spice into the melting pot." The club worked to reach men and women who might not have identified with suffrage organizations but might respond to information communicated in their native tongue. The SWSA also took advantage of its international alliances, gaining advice and support while solidifying ties with successful women's suffrage movements in Scandinavia.<sup>20</sup>

Another vital function was the SWSA's lobbying of Scandinavian American lawmakers—specifically Norwegian American state senators Ole O. Sageng and N. S. Hegnes and U.S. Senator Knute Nelson—for support of suffrage bills and amendments. In these efforts, SWSA members often referred to Scandinavian legislative victories. In 1915, for example, Jaeger informed Hegnes: "Our Scandinavian Woman Suffrage Association is particularly anxious that no legislator of Scandinavian birth or blood be found less fair-minded toward his sister in this our adopted country than is his brother in the old country."<sup>21</sup>

The SWSA also acted as a liaison

between other pro-suffrage Scandinavian American organizations and ethnic legislators. For example, in a 1918 letter to Jaeger, pastors of the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Augustana Synod challenged the claim that they opposed women's suffrage; 16 of them had signed a petition calling for immediate implementation of the federal suffrage amendment. The pastors asked Jaeger to forward their letter to, among others, Senator Nelson.<sup>22</sup> Clearly, the synod aligned itself with the SWSA on ethnic grounds, proof of the value of using ethnicity to further the suffrage cause.

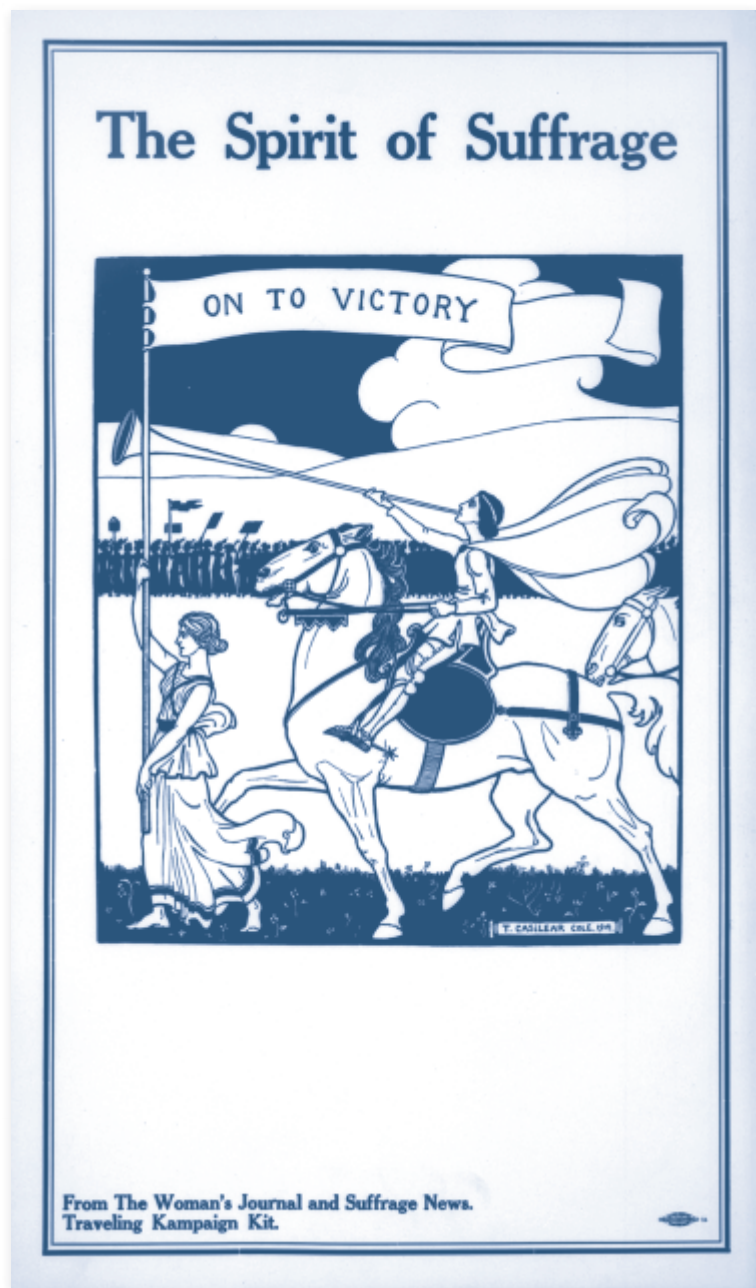
Members also employed their heritage to aid a variety of other suffrage organizations; the *Minneapolis Tribune* announced that they "stand ready at any time to lend their assistance to any movement that may demand concerted action on the part of the women."<sup>23</sup> In this way, the SWSA extended its reach beyond Minnesota. Across the country, both state-level suffrage organizations and leaders of the national campaign called upon the SWSA to petition Scandinavian populations for support.

North Dakota, for instance, was a logical target for the SWSA because Scandinavian Americans made up more than a quarter of its population in 1910 and Norwegian Americans were involved in progressive political movements such as the Nonpartisan League. When the North Dakota legislature prepared to vote on a suffrage amendment in 1914, the SWSA sent help to the North Dakota Votes for Women League (NDVWL) by dispatching its former president, Jenova Martin, to aid them. Martin, a native Norwegian speaker, would have been invaluable both for her suffragist experience and her ability to communicate with recent Norwegian

immigrants, North Dakota's largest foreign-born population in 1910. She traveled the state for two weeks as a representative of the SWSA and delivered speeches in both Norwegian and English.<sup>24</sup>

In addition, the SWSA offered practical advice. To ensure that the NDVWL had ample materials to lobby Scandinavian Americans,

Jaeger sent suffrage articles to the league's office in Fargo. Elizabeth D. O'Neil, the league's campaign manager, wrote to Jaeger about continuing interstate suffrage cooperation even after the 1914 campaign push failed. O'Neil indicated that the NDVWL was interested in learning how to use ethnic heritage to better appeal to the state's Scandinavian



Poster, about 1912, distributed by the Woman's Journal and Suffrage News, official organ of the National American Woman Suffrage Association

population and promised to have the articles Jaeger sent published in Fargo's Scandinavian newspaper, presumably the Norwegian-language *Fram*.<sup>25</sup>

Similarly, the SWSA reached beyond state boundaries to rally ethnic support in the national suffrage campaign. The rift between the more radical National Woman's Party (NWP) and the more traditional National American Woman Suffrage Association had compelled many suffrage clubs to choose sides. The SWSA aligned itself with the NWP, possibly because of Jaeger's support of militant techniques, which included her approval of the NWP's decision to picket the White House during World War I. Picketing was a divisive issue within the SWSA; nevertheless, members carried the club's banner during Minnesota Day on the picket line.<sup>26</sup>

Alice Paul, chairwoman of the NWP, saw the SWSA as an efficient way to reach Scandinavian

Americans across the country. As the party learned of particular communities open to information about suffrage, it contacted the SWSA. As late as 1920, for example, the NWP asked the SWSA to encourage support among Swedish Americans in Delaware.<sup>27</sup>

**I**N MINNEAPOLIS AND ST. PAUL, the SWSA maintained a strong presence on the cultural scene in an effort to gain suffrage supporters. It hosted activities and raised funds for the Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association and also organized its own Scandinavian American cultural events. (Some of the money it raised from its own events helped make up for the lack of membership dues.) In all of these endeavors, the SWSA imparted a distinctly Scandinavian flair to American suffrage goals. Folk costumes and folk dancing at many of these gatherings helped to draw a crowd. In 1915, the club even held a

reception honoring Aino Malmberg, a Finnish women's rights activist, enlarging its definition of Scandinavian to appeal to a wider audience.<sup>28</sup>

One of the largest fundraising events the SWSA staged was an evening of dramatic and musical entertainment on February 28, 1917. The main attraction was a well-known Swedish suffragist play, *The Prime Minister's Daughters*. (The Norwegian fairytale "Gudbrand i Lien" was the curtain-raiser.) The *Minneapolis Tribune* estimated that more than 1,000 people, many of them Norwegian and Swedish Americans, attended this event at Central High School in St. Paul.<sup>29</sup>

The SWSA joined forces with the other Twin Cities suffrage clubs when it came to important events, such as the Minneapolis parade on national Suffrage Red Letter Day—Saturday, May 2, 1914. Ethel Hurd of the PEC organized the celebration. President Jaeger wanted the SWSA's participation to contribute to the overall artistic feel of the parade. According to the *Minneapolis Tribune*, the entire occasion was both a huge surprise and a big success: "Another continuous cheer producer. Clearly she was a Scandinavian. She carried an impressive little banner which gave forth the word that Norway and Sweden give women the same voting rights as men. Behind this banner followed a big delegation of Scandinavian women."<sup>30</sup>

A photograph of the Scandinavian section shows women dressed in traditional costumes marching along, holding the Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish flags and an English-language sign demanding the vote. Besides demonstrating the suffrag-



*Preparing to picket the White House, Minnesota Day, 1917*

ists' ethnic heritage, the native costumes also made the Scandinavian section a vibrant and festive addition to the procession. The pointed reminder that Americans were behind other countries in granting women rights was another instance of using shame as a rhetorical strategy. But for Scandinavian Americans, the banner clearly linked the current battle in the United States to triumphs in the Old Country.

Ethnicity did not play an overt role in all of the SWSA's activities, however. Other local suffrage clubs often praised the group for its fundraising ability—and for good reason. In the mid-1910s the SWSA took on the task of raising the money for a suffragist building on the Minnesota State Fairgrounds. Jaeger's papers reveal that the group, at first, pledged five hundred dollars; when fundraising proved successful, the SWSA committed to the entire sum. The local press reported that, while the architectural plans and some of the building materials were donated, most of the work was accomplished with funds provided by the SWSA. Before the building opened in 1917, suffragists had worked from booths, seeking to educate and entertain fairgoers with literature, films, and folk dances.<sup>31</sup>

The new structure was called the Woman Citizen Building in hopes that women would use it long after the vote was won. It served as a gathering place—both an information hub, educating the public on why women should vote, and a place for all women to socialize, rest, and relax in front of a central fireplace built with a bequest from the will of Julia B. Nelson.<sup>32</sup> While the SWSA probably targeted Scandinavian Americans during the



*Woman Citizen Building, Minnesota State Fair, 1917*

fundraising stage, when that phase was completed the club turned the proceeds over to the state suffrage organization.

**T**HE ONSET OF WORLD WAR I in 1914 affected European immigrants' status in the United States and had ramifications for all ethnic organizations. The violent backlash against German Americans, in particular, caused many people to renounce

of Scandinavian identity was not swayed by the threat of ostracism. The club had long promoted both its ethnic heritage and suffrage as being part of American democracy. In 1917, after the U.S. entered the war, the SWSA overtly linked its ethnicity to Americanism. At an October loyalty event—an evening reception with music and entertainment—it hosted a Swedish opera singer and also staged a “patriotic pantomime” in which peace and liberty joined hands.<sup>34</sup>

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their ethnic heritage, try to lose their tell-tale Old World accents, and adopt the dominant Anglo cultural norms in fear of being singled out as anti-American. Although this scenario was especially acute in German-speaking communities, its effects were far reaching, touching members of other ethnic groups as well.<sup>33</sup>

As its successful public events in this era attest, the SWSA's use

The era's anti-ethnic mood, however, did have an effect on the SWSA. Months before the war began, Jenova Martin wrote to Jaeger, cautioning her about the potentially low turnout of volunteers for the Scandinavian section of the May 1914 suffrage parade. She warned that many area suffragists might not want to march because “they do not want to be looked upon as *Scandinavians*.”<sup>35</sup>



The desire to avoid ethnic identification is probably also what led the SWSA to contemplate a name change. At its regular meeting in April 1918, a motion to become the Woman Citizen Association was debated. Arguments ensued about whether the club's Old World identification was detrimental to the cause, and a motion to defer the decision to a later meeting was accepted.<sup>36</sup> Ultimately, the motion did not pass. Scandinavian Americans might have disassociated themselves from their

ethnicity in other ways, such as by adopting the English language in churches and schools, but the SWSA chose to maintain its ethnic affiliation, even in the face of extreme assimilationist rhetoric.

**C**LOSE STUDY OF THE SCANDINAVIAN Woman Suffrage Association demonstrates that a variety of people were involved in the fight for women's rights. Men, women, and children from different social classes

cut across Old World nationality lines to form a coalition committed to the cause. The SWSA not only serves as an example of a club that flourished because of its ethnic identity but also demonstrates the usefulness of reexamining the American women's suffrage movement with new methods and perspectives. The details of the SWSA, its membership and activities, speak to the nuances and diversity of women's strategies in the contested arenas of ethnic identification and political rights. □

## Notes

1. *Minneapolis Tribune*, Feb. 26, 1917, p. 10, Feb. 27, 1917, p. 20, Mar. 1, 1917, p. 6.

2. Nanny Mattson [Mrs. Luth] Jaeger, report to the suffrage convention, 1915, box 3, Luth and Nanny Mattson Jaeger Papers, Minnesota Historical Society (MHS). Unless otherwise specified, all archival material is from this collection. Its four boxes contain many undated, untitled speeches, presentations, drafts, and reports. All membership analysis in this article is based on correlating SWSA membership cards, box 4, with the 1910 and 1920 U.S. manuscript census.

In 1910 the Soderberg and Sundean families each had daughters under the age of ten listed as members. Five other members were second- or third-generation Americans from Bohemia, Germany, and Ireland. All were married to prominent Scandinavian American men, which must have superseded their own heritage.

3. Ethel E. Hurd, *Woman Suffrage in Minnesota* (Minneapolis: Minnesota Woman Suffrage Assn., 1916), 7–15; Jaeger, "To the Suffragists of Minnesota," undated, box 3. Hurd also organized the Workers' Equal Suffrage Club in 1909; Barbara Stuhler, *Gentle Warriors: Clara Ueland and the Minnesota Struggle for Woman Suffrage* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1995), 81.

4. Karen Offen, *European Feminisms, 1700 to 1950: A Political History* (Stanford, CA: University of California Press, 2000), xxvi; Jaeger, speech, undated, box 3.

5. Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan first articulated this definition of ethnicity in *Beyond the Melting Pot* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1963). Kathleen Neils Conzen et al. expanded it in "The Invention of Ethnicity: A Perspective from the USA," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 12 (Fall 1992): 3–41.

6. "Introduction," in *They Chose Minnesota: A Survey of the State's Ethnic Groups*, ed. June Drenning Holmquist (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1981), 2; John R. Jenschold, "The Hidden Settlement': Norwegian Americans Encounter the City, 1880–1930" (PhD diss., University of Connecticut, 1990), 97.

7. Hurd, *Woman Suffrage*, 12; *Minneapolis Tribune*, Nov. 13, 1910, p. 25, Dec. 28, 1913, p. 8, Oct. 18, 1914, p. G6.

8. Marjorie Bingham, "Nanny Mattson Jaeger," in *The Privilege for Which We Struggled: Leaders of the Woman Suffrage Movement in Minnesota*, ed. Heidi Bauer (St. Paul: Upper Midwest Women's History Center, 1999), 80–83; *Minneapolis Tribune*, July 9, 1916, p. D5, Oct. 26, 1917, p. 10; Americanization folders and correspondence between Jaeger and the American Assimilation League, boxes 1–3; Jaeger, speech, undated, box 3. Although Scandinavians often intermarried, most of the SWSA's members wed men of the same national background.

9. Orm Øverland, *Immigrant Minds, American Identities: Making the United States Home, 1870–1930* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 6. Well-known suffragists such as Harriot Stanton Blatch and Carrie Chapman Catt believed that German immigrants were particularly averse to women's political rights; this stereotype was often linked to Catholicism. Ellen Carol Dubois, *Harriot Stanton Blatch and the Winning of Woman Suffrage* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 148–64; Cathleen Sprows Cummings, *New Women of the Old Faith: Gender and American Catholicism in the Progressive Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

10. Julia B. Nelson, "Hans Dunderkopf's Views on Equality," 1882, box 3; Helen

Egilsrud, "Vore Idealer," in *Souvenir: "Norse-American Woman," 1825–1925*, ed. Alma A. Gutteresen and Regina Hilleboe Christensen (St. Paul: Lutheran Free Church Publishing, 1926), 132–35.

11. McDonaugh and Price, "Woman's Suffrage in the Progressive Era: Patterns of Positions and Support in Referenda Voting, 1910–1918," *American Political Science Review* 79 (1985): 424, found that Scandinavian American men in Ohio and Michigan were second only to Anglo Americans in support. Jaeger, speech, undated, box 3.

12. *Minneapolis Tribune*, Dec. 28, 1913, p. 8, Dec. 30, 1913, p. 5.

13. Membership cards, box 4.

14. Political Equality Club to Ole Sageng, Feb. 22, 1915, Ole O. Sageng Papers, MHS; Anna M. Peterson, "A Dash of Suffrage Spice: Rural and Urban Ethnicity Construction in the Transnational Women's Suffrage Movement" (master's thesis, University of North Dakota, 2009), 129.

15. Peterson, "Suffrage Spice," 126. For a general discussion of Danish American assimilation rates, see *Multiculturalism in the United States: A Comparative Guide to Acculturation and Ethnicity*, ed. John D. Buenker and Lorman A. Ratner (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood Publishing, 2005), 353.

16. Stuhler, *Gentle Warriors*, 81; Peterson, "Suffrage Spice," 127, 129. Most of the SWSA's female members were not single and working.

17. Peterson, "Suffrage Spice," 128. Three of these 12 men could not be found in the censuses.

18. The occupational categories were: professional, government employee, merchant, skilled worker, artisan, laborer, salesman, farmer, female occupation, own income, none, and other. See Peterson, "Suffrage Spice," 116–19, for a breakdown of

occupations by ethnicity, generation, and gender and a discussion of methodology.

19. Carl G. O. Hansen, *My Minneapolis* (Minneapolis: Standard Press, 1956), 258. Tingdale edited a publication called *Kvindens Magasin* (Woman's Magazine); *Newspaper Annual and Directory: A Catalogue of American Newspapers* (Philadelphia: N. W. Ayer and Son, 1916), 474. Jaeger is the only officer who appears in the 1910 or 1920 census. She was 50 years old in 1910 and had a teenage daughter living at home. Her household had no domestic servants. Little is known about Martin's family, but it has been theorized that her husband came from the working class. For an unsubstantiated discussion of her economic situation, see Anja Bakken, *Our Country Gives Us the Vote—America Refuses It: Norwegian-American Suffrage Workers in Brooklyn and Minneapolis, 1880–1920, and Their Gendered Sense of Ethnicity* (master's thesis, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, 1998).

20. Jaeger, report to Minnesota women's suffrage convention, 1915; Jaeger, speech, undated; and Ellen Key, quoted in "To the Suffragists of Minnesota," undated—all box 3. *Minneapolis Tribune*, Nov. 8, 1915, p. 7.

21. Jaeger, report . . . 1915; Jaeger to N. S. Hegnes, Feb. 2, 1915, box 1. Hegnes replied (Feb. 11) that he opposed suffrage.

22. G. K. Stark to Jaeger, May 23, 1918, box 2. The relationship between Lutheran synods and the women's suffrage movement is complex and understudied. Many synods actively supported suffrage in hope of receiving temperance support in return, while other churches vehemently opposed women's political participation, both in church and in society. For overviews of the interplay between gender, ethnicity, and religion, see DeAne L. Lagerquist, *In America the Men Milk the Cows: Factors of Gender, Ethnicity and Religion in the Americanization of Norwegian-American Women* (Brooklyn: Carlson Pub., 1991); Dag Blanck, *Becoming Swedish-American: The Construction of an Ethnic Identity in the Augustana Synod, 1860–1917* (Uppsala, Sweden: Uppsala University Press, 1997).

23. *Minneapolis Tribune*, Nov. 17, 1912, p. 30.

24. First- and second-generation Norwegians, Swedes, and Danes accounted for 28 percent of North Dakota's population in 1910; U.S., *Census, 1910, Population*, 343, 344; *Minneapolis Tribune*, Oct. 18, 1914, p. G6. On participation in the NPL, see Daron William Olson, "Norwegians, Socialism and the Nonpartisan League in North Dakota: How Red Was Their Protest" (master's thesis, University of North Dakota,

1993); Lowell Soike, *Norwegian-Americans and the Politics of Dissent, 1880–1924* (Northfield, MN: Norwegian-American Historical Assn., 1991). North Dakota did not pass a suffrage amendment until 1917.

25. Elizabeth O'Neil to "Mrs. Jaezer," Oct. 19, 1914, box 1.

26. A photo of the delegation is in National Woman's Party Records, Group I, container I:160, folder: Pickets, 1917, Library of Congress, <http://1.usa.gov/r6DZpD> (accessed Oct. 11, 2011); Bingham, "Jaeger," 82–83.

27. National Woman's Party to Jaeger, May 4, 1920, box 1.

28. *Minneapolis Tribune*, Nov. 13, 1910, p. 25, Nov. 8, 1915, p. 7, July 1, 1917, p. B2, Aug. 5, 1917, p. B1; Jaeger, report . . . 1915.

29. *Minneapolis Tribune*, Mar. 1, 1917, p. 6.

30. Here and below, *Minneapolis Tribune*, Mar. 29, 1914, p. C6, May 3, 1914, p. 1, 3.

31. Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association (MWSA) to WWSA, boxes 1 and 2; Jaeger, speech on presentation to state suf-

frage assn., Sept. 1917, box 3; *Minneapolis Tribune*, Sept. 4, 1914, p. 10. For an overview of MWSA fundraising, see Hurd, *Woman Suffrage*, 46–49.

32. *Minneapolis Tribune*, Aug. 26, 1917, p. B4.

33. Carl H. Chrislock, *Ethnicity Challenged: The Upper Midwest Norwegian-American Experience in World War I* (Northfield, MN: Norwegian-American Historical Assn., 1981), 41, 144.

34. *Minneapolis Tribune*, Oct. 26, 1917, p. 10, Oct. 27, 1917, p. 3.

35. Martin to Jaeger, undated, box 1.

36. Jaeger to club members, May 9, 1918, box 2.

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*Minneapolis women lined up to vote for the first time.*



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