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## SOUTH CAROLINA AND THE ENFRANCHISEMENT OF WOMEN: THE EARLY YEARS

ANTOINETTE ELIZABETH TAYLOR \*

In the realm of women's enfranchisement, South Carolina was a reluctant state. During the suffrage movement, crusaders for the cause saw their efforts come to naught. They were able to win no concessions from the state legislature and finally gained the vote through a federal amendment. Not until almost fifty years later did South Carolina "legitimize" her women voters. In 1969 the legislature ratified the Susan B. Anthony Amendment. It also submitted to the electorate a proposal to remove the word "male" from the suffrage qualifications of the South Carolina Constitution. In this way, women gained a delayed victory in a reluctant state.

In general, the South as a section showed slight enthusiasm for votes-for-women, and there was little agitation in that region until the last decade of the nineteenth century. In South Carolina, the movement began in 1890 when a small group of women held a conference in Greenville.<sup>1</sup> The instigator of this meeting was Mrs. Virginia Durant Young of Fairfax, a native of South Carolina and the wife of William H. Young, a physician. As the wife of a doctor in a country town, Mrs. Young was known as a model housekeeper, community benefactor, and all-round good citizen. Her interests and ideas transcended the bounds of her locale, however. Encouraged by her husband, she embraced the philosophy of votes-for-women.<sup>2</sup>

While visiting in Greenville in 1890, Mrs. Young and her hostess, Mrs. Adelaide Viola Neblett, sponsored a woman's rights conference. Several women attended, and the members of this small but bold group pledged to work for their right to vote in South Carolina.<sup>3</sup>

This conference undoubtedly caused some tongue-wagging in Greenville, but it passed unnoticed throughout the state. Mrs. Young was not easily discouraged, however. While visiting in Beaufort in 1891,

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<sup>1</sup> Virginia D. Young, "South Carolina," Stanton, Anthony, et al., eds., *History of Woman Suffrage* (6 vols. Rochester and New York, 1881-1922), IV, 922.

<sup>2</sup> In 1892 Mrs. Young stated: "I am blessed with a husband who considers me his equal and insists on my using my judgment in all matters." Virginia D. Young to Robert R. Hemphill, December 12, 1892, Hemphill Papers, Duke University.

<sup>3</sup> Young, "South Carolina," *Woman Suffrage*, IV, 922.

she was asked to address the local chapter of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. She used the occasion to urge women to seek the franchise so that they could vote for prohibition. During the same year, she made suffrage speeches at Lexington and Marion. These addresses were received with "many expressions of approval."<sup>4</sup>

In 1892 the National American Woman Suffrage Association appointed Mrs. Young vice-president for South Carolina. She then proceeded to organize the South Carolina Equal Rights Association as an auxiliary of the National Association. This organization began with sixty members, mostly women, from nineteen towns.<sup>5</sup> Its constitution, written by Mrs. Young, called for woman suffrage with an educational qualification and urged the promotion of the cause "by personal influence, the distribution of literature, and other practicable methods."<sup>6</sup> Mrs. Young was the organization's president.<sup>7</sup>

As president of the South Carolina Association, Mrs. Young accelerated her activity. She spoke at the state convention of the W. C. T. U. and at a meeting of the State Press Association. She wrote two hundred and forty personal letters and distributed one hundred and fifty parcels of literature. She contributed suffrage articles to several newspapers, among them the *Charleston News and Courier*, the *Sumter Freeman*,<sup>8</sup> the *Palmetto Post*, and the *Hampton Guardian*.<sup>9</sup>

The South Carolina suffragists were fortunate in having a staunch male supporter in the person of Robert R. Hemphill, editor of the *Abbeville Medium* and a member of the South Carolina Senate.<sup>10</sup> On Decem-

<sup>4</sup> *Woman's Journal*, XXIII (April 30, 1892), 140.

<sup>5</sup> *Proceedings of the Annual Convention of the National American Woman Suffrage Association*, 1893, p. 147. Hereafter cited as *NAWSA Proceedings*. *Woman's Journal*, XXIV (February 4, 1893), 34. The towns were Greenville, Beaufort, Lexington, Allendale, Fairfax, Marion, Frogmore, Port Royal, Johnston, Charleston, Columbia, Chitty, Peebles, Mt. Pleasant, Sumter, Mt. Joy, Brunson, Aiken, and Abbeville.

<sup>6</sup> *NAWSA Proceedings*, 1893, p. 147.

<sup>7</sup> Mrs. Young was the only president of the South Carolina Equal Rights Association. She held this office continuously until her death in 1906.

<sup>8</sup> J. J. Dargan, editor of the *Sumter Freeman*, was a member of the Equal Rights Association.

<sup>9</sup> *NAWSA Proceedings*, 1893, p. 147. *Woman's Journal*, XXIV (February 4, 1893), 34.

<sup>10</sup> Robert Reed Hemphill, son of a Presbyterian preacher, was born in 1839. Twenty years later he graduated from Erskine College where his father was a member of the faculty. He was admitted to the Bar of South Carolina but forsook the practice of law for a career in politics and journalism. In 1871, he founded the *Abbeville Medium*, which he edited until his death in 1906. He was the father of six daughters, one of whom won state-wide prominence as a clubwoman and suffrage leader.

ber 10, 1892, Hemphill introduced a joint resolution to enfranchise women through an amendment to the state constitution. This resolution was referred to the Committee on Privileges and Elections which reported it unfavorably. Hemphill then moved the indefinite postponement of the unfavorable report.<sup>11</sup>

The motion to postpone was debated in the Senate before an audience of about two hundred women. Hemphill stated that woman suffrage was "founded in justice and demanded by the dictates of an enlightened public sentiment." A. T. Smythe of Charleston, chairman of the Committee on Privileges and Elections, defended the unfavorable report. He contended that woman's position was "too high, noble and elevated to be brought down to the level of the ward politician," and denied that any appreciable number of women wanted the franchise.<sup>12</sup>

The Senate then voted on the Hemphill motion and defeated it fourteen to twenty-one.<sup>13</sup> The unfavorable report prevailed, and the suffrage resolution was thereby rejected.

The Senate's action aroused comment in the press. The *Columbia State* editorialized that Senator Hemphill was a "little ahead of his time" and expressed surprise that his motion had received as many as fourteen favorable votes. It concluded that the cause was "making progress and predicted the ultimate triumph of woman suffrage."<sup>14</sup> Less favorable was the reaction of the *Easley Democrat* which advised Hemphill to "bring Mrs. [Mary Elizabeth] Lease and Mrs. Victoria Woodhull and some of the Yankee female viragoes . . . [to South Carolina] and let them speak for the bill."<sup>15</sup> Similar sentiments were expressed by the *Pickens Sentinel* which called Hemphill's proposal "amazing" and regretted that time has been spent on such "foolishness."<sup>16</sup>

During 1893, Mrs. Young prepared a petition asking for her rights as a citizen. In this document, she described herself as "native born, over twenty-one years of age, of sane mind," and able to read and write the English language. Because of her sex, however, she was taxed without representation and governed without her consent. Other disfran-

<sup>11</sup> *South Carolina Senate Journal*, 1892, pp. 199, 210, 325. Hemphill introduced this resolution primarily to "excite discussion." No one seriously expected its adoption.

<sup>12</sup> *Columbia State*, December 17, 1892. John T. Sloan of Columbia spoke against the measure also. His objections were similar to those of Smythe.

<sup>13</sup> *South Carolina Senate Journal*, 1892, p. 325.

<sup>14</sup> *Columbia State*, December 11, 17, 1892. *Woman's Journal*, XXIII (December 24, 1892), 418.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, XXIV (January 14, 1893), 12.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

chised persons, such as criminals and aliens, could be pardoned or naturalized. But there was no pardon for the crime of being born a woman. She objected to the "injustice and humiliation of being classed with the insane, criminals, and idiots," and asked the General Assembly "to forthwith pass a special act creating the power" to which she could apply for her "Enfranchisement Papers."<sup>17</sup>

On December 9th, Hemphill presented Mrs. Young's petition to the South Carolina Senate. The Senate referred it to the Committee on Privileges and Elections, which judged it unworthy of consideration.<sup>18</sup> The *Columbia State* sympathized with Mrs. Young's appeal in an editorial which noted that the "most degraded men of the lowest intelligence [were] admitted to participation in government," while "patriotic, intelligent and capable" women were barred. Few South Carolina women seemed interested in the ballot, but Mrs. Young's appeal would "have its effect." In the *State's* opinion, woman's enfranchisement was "only a matter of time."<sup>19</sup>

The following February, Mrs. Young attended the annual convention of the National American Woman Suffrage Association in Washington. She returned to South Carolina and continued her energetic crusading. Since the Equal Rights Association lacked "thorough organization," Mrs. Young often found herself acting "as president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer and press reporter."<sup>20</sup> She wrote seven articles for the *Charleston News and Courier*, three for the *Columbia State*, and two for the *Columbia Journal*. She was also a contributor to the *Sumter Freeman*, the *Barnwell People*, the *Hampton Guardian*, and the *Varnville Enterprise*, of which she was an associate editor. She wrote a suffrage novelette entitled *Walnuts* which was published in weekly installments in the *Columbia Evening Journal*.<sup>21</sup> Her efforts bore fruit for by the end of the year, the Equal Rights Association had 107 members in twenty-seven localities.<sup>22</sup>

In February, 1895 Mrs. Young, Robert R. Hemphill, and several other South Carolinians attended the National American Woman

<sup>17</sup> Petition of Mrs. Virginia D. Young to the Honorable Members of the General Assembly of South Carolina, Hemphill Papers, Duke University.

<sup>18</sup> *South Carolina Senate Journal*, 1893, pp. 145, 204.

<sup>19</sup> *Columbia State*, December 10, 1893.

<sup>20</sup> *NAWSA Proceedings*, 1895, p. 86. Since the Equal Rights Association was chronically short of funds, Mrs. Young bore most of the cost of promoting the suffrage cause.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

Suffrage Association convention in Atlanta, Georgia.<sup>23</sup> While there, Hemphill made an address in which he told of his efforts in behalf of suffrage in the South Carolina Senate. He felt that the cause was making headway in spite of the "prejudices of hundreds of years," and predicted that the time would come when women would "enjoy equal rights."<sup>24</sup>

After the Atlanta convention, two nationally prominent suffragists visited South Carolina en route to their homes in New York. They were Susan B. Anthony and Lillie Devereux Blake. Mrs. Blake was the guest of the Hemphills at Abbeville where she presented the suffrage question "quite ably and unhesitatingly" in an address at the court house.<sup>25</sup> Miss Anthony spoke in Aiken and Columbia. In Aiken, she was the guest of Miss Martha Schofield, president of Schofield College for Negroes.<sup>26</sup> In Columbia, she addressed an audience of sixty people under the auspices of the Union for Practical Progress, a woman's group that favored enfranchisement but wished to avoid being labeled as suffragist.<sup>27</sup>

During the spring of 1895, several attempts were made to form local equal rights clubs as auxiliaries to the state association. Following Mrs. Blake's visit in Abbeville, a club was organized with Mrs. Hannah Hemphill Coleman, a daughter of Robert R. Hemphill, as president. It had fifteen members, most of them married women who brought their babies to its meetings.<sup>28</sup> In May, an equal rights club was organized in Columbia. It began with a "pretty strong membership" and held several well-attended meetings. After a few weeks, however, its president, Mrs. Anna Trezevant Badham, left Columbia for the summer. She resigned her office, but no successor was elected, and the organization became defunct.<sup>29</sup> Attempts to form local auxiliaries in Spartanburg and Columbia failed, but a club of twelve members was organized in Florence.<sup>30</sup>

During 1895, the State of South Carolina held a convention for the purpose of writing a new constitution. One of the convention's objectives was the establishment of qualifications for voting that would reduce the

<sup>23</sup> Other delegates from South Carolina were Mary P. Gridley, Martha Schofield, and Adelaide Viola Neblett.

<sup>24</sup> Stanton and Anthony, *Woman Suffrage*, IV, 242.

<sup>25</sup> *Columbia State*, February 7, 1895.

<sup>26</sup> Martha Schofield was a native of Pennsylvania and the daughter of a well-to-do Quaker family. She came to South Carolina following the Civil War and in 1868, established Schofield College. She often dramatized her disfranchised status by paying her taxes "under protest."

<sup>27</sup> *Columbia State*, February 13, 1895.

<sup>28</sup> *Woman's Journal*, XXVI (March 16, 1895), 84. *Ibid.*, XXVI (April 27, 1895), 136.

<sup>29</sup> *Columbia State*, May 8, 1895. *Ibid.*, May 17, 1895.

<sup>30</sup> *Woman's Journal*, XXVI (June 15, 1895), 186.

number of Negroes, and thereby insure "white supremacy."<sup>31</sup> The suffragists saw in this situation an opportunity to appeal for partial enfranchisement.

The potential of woman suffrage as a device for minimizing the Negro vote had been considered at a constitutional convention in Mississippi in 1890. The strategy was to enfranchise women with property and/or educational qualifications. Since few black women would be able to meet these requirements, the result would be an increase in the number of white voters. The Mississippi convention discussed this proposition at some length but decided against it.<sup>32</sup>

In spite of Mississippi's rejection, the possibility of using woman suffrage to offset the Negro vote continued to be of interest. Its supporters were not restricted to the South. Henry B. Blackwell of Boston published a pamphlet in which he recommended suffrage with an educational qualification as "A Solution of the Southern Race Problem." He cited statistics to show that literate white women in the southern states significantly outnumbered the blacks. His daughter, Alice Stone Blackwell, urged Robert R. Hemphill to introduce a bill to grant municipal suffrage to women who could read and write.<sup>33</sup> Other nationally prominent suffragists tacitly or openly approved the strategy. Within South Carolina, the *Columbia State* went on record in favor of enfranchising women who were "intelligent and property-owning." Since most of them would be white, their enfranchisement would contribute to the maintenance of "white supremacy."<sup>34</sup>

During the spring of 1895, a group of women toured South Carolina in behalf of equal suffrage. The group consisted of three women from out-of-state and two from South Carolina. Its leader was Laura Clay of Kentucky, a daughter of Cassius M. Clay and one of the few southern women to achieve national prominence in the movement. Also from out-of-state were Elizabeth Upham Yates of Maine and Helen Morris Lewis of North Carolina. Mrs. Yates was an accomplished speaker and active crusader, while Miss Lewis, a native of Charleston, was president of the North Carolina Equal Rights Association. The South Carolinians in the group were Virginia D. Young and Adelaide Viola Neblett.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Francis Butler Simkins, *The Tillman Movement* (Durham, 1926), 212-214.

<sup>32</sup> A. Elizabeth Taylor, "The Woman Suffrage Movement in Mississippi, 1890-1920," *Journal of Mississippi History*, XXX (1968), 1-5.

<sup>33</sup> Alice Stone Blackwell to Robert R. Hemphill, December 12, 1892, Hemphill Papers, Duke University.

<sup>34</sup> *Columbia State*, February 13, 1895. *Ibid.*, May 1, 1895.

<sup>35</sup> They were, on occasions, joined by Robert R. Hemphill and Floride Cunningham. Floride Cunningham was a niece of Ann Pamela Cunningham, founder and long-time regent of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union.

The women began their tour in Greenville on April 29th. During their two-day visit, they were "heard with respect and pleasure" by audiences consisting of the "best people of the city."<sup>36</sup> It was doubted, however, that they won many converts. On May 1 and 2 they conducted a series of meetings in Spartanburg, where they made a favorable impression but were unable to organize a suffrage club.<sup>37</sup> In Columbia on May 3rd, Young, Lewis, and Clay addressed a "large audience" of "cultivated men and women" in the House of Representatives Hall in the Capitol.<sup>38</sup> The following day, they held afternoon and evening meetings, and then went on to Charleston, where they spent two days promoting their cause. In Charleston, they addressed "large, brilliant and fashionable" audiences but failed to form a suffrage club.<sup>39</sup> The *News and Courier* stated that they made a "good impression," that logic was on their side, but that public sentiment was overwhelmingly against them.<sup>40</sup>

The women considered their speaking tour a success and thought that it advanced the cause in the state.<sup>41</sup> They realized that people often came to their meetings "from motives of curiosity" but felt that they "went away to discuss the merits of the question."<sup>42</sup> They told their audiences that women were intelligent, women were educated, women were taxpayers, and women were property-owners. The time for their "independence was at hand."<sup>43</sup> They also pointed out that the enfranchisement of women with an educational and property qualification would result in white majorities in South Carolina. In this regard, the *Columbia State* editorialized that this "proposed solution" to the race problem was "proving more attractive every day."<sup>44</sup>

The constitutional convention assembled on September 10, 1895. A few days later, on September 16th, L. E. Parker of Colleton proposed the enfranchisement of women who could read the state constitution and who owned three hundred dollars worth of property. To eliminate the possibility of embarrassment at the polls, Parker recommended that

<sup>36</sup> *Columbia State*, May 1, 1895.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, May 3, 1895. *Charleston News and Courier*, May 5, 6, 1895.

<sup>38</sup> *Columbia State*, May 4, 1895.

<sup>39</sup> *Charleston News and Courier*, May 8, 1895.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, May 9, 1895.

<sup>41</sup> Upon leaving Charleston, the group divided so that its members could make brief visits to the following towns: Georgetown, Florence, Marion, Latta, Darlington, Greenwood, Timmonsville, Sumter, Allendale, Barnwell, Hampton, Orangeburg, Winnsboro, Prosperity, Laurens, and Beaufort.

<sup>42</sup> *Woman's Journal*, XXVI (May 25, 1895), 161.

<sup>43</sup> *Columbia State*, May 4, 1895.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

they be permitted to vote by proxy. His proposal was referred to the Committee on Suffrage.<sup>45</sup>

The following evening, September 17th, the convention heard addresses by Young, Neblett, and Clay.<sup>46</sup> Mrs. Young said that women were both citizens and taxpayers, and, as such, should be enfranchised as an "act of justice." She denied that politics would be too corrupt for women and predicted that they would "come in with mops and brooms" and "cleanse away the corruption." Mrs. Neblett cited numerous legal discriminations against women, who, as disfranchised persons, were classed with children, aliens, idiots, lunatics, and criminals. She urged the removal of these disabilities so that women could exert their rightful influence. Laura Clay saw in qualified woman suffrage a solution for the "vexed problem of white supremacy" and said that it would be a "noble service to the whole nation" if South Carolina solved her problem in this way.<sup>47</sup>

During the days that followed, the suffragists continued to lobby. They contacted delegates, distributed literature, and appeared before committees whenever the occasion permitted. Their efforts were unavailing, however, for when the Committee on Suffrage reported, it recommended that voting be restricted to males.<sup>48</sup>

The convention debated the report on October 28th. W. F. Clayton of Florence moved that it be amended to extend the franchise to women who owned three hundred dollars worth of taxable property.<sup>49</sup> Clayton considered his proposal the "true solution" to the Negro problem and urged the delegates to "throw aside" their prejudices and give women this right. George D. Tillman of Edgefield saw nothing degrading about women's voting and favored it as a means of insuring white majorities. John J. McMahan of Richland stated that women had too long been stereotyped as "fashion plates and scandal mongers." The ballot would, in his opinion, broaden their sphere and make them "true companions of men." Hemphill said that woman suffrage would increase the number

<sup>45</sup> *Journal of the Constitutional Convention of the State of South Carolina*, 1895, p. 110.

<sup>46</sup> Other women who came to Columbia to lobby for suffrage were Mrs. Florence Evans of Marion, Miss Martha Schofield of Aiken, Mrs. M. M. Buckner of Fairfax, and Mrs. Annie Durant of Peedee.

<sup>47</sup> *Columbia State*, September 18, 1895. *Charleston News and Courier*, September 18, 1895. The suffragists placed on each delegate's desk a copy of Henry B. Blackwell's "A Solution of the Southern Race Problem."

<sup>48</sup> *Convention Journal*, 1895, p. 292.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 421.

of white voters. When asked whether women would vote if enfranchised, he replied that they would do their duty.<sup>50</sup>

One of the convention's Negro delegates, T. E. Miller of Beaufort, favored suffrage for all women, not just those owning property. Miller said that he hoped "to see the time when the women with black skins and the white women of any class would go to the ballot box together" to vote for "purity" and "high sentiments."<sup>51</sup>

D. S. Henderson of Aiken labeled as "pure cowardice" the proposal to enfranchise women for the purpose of insuring white majorities. Woman's sphere was the home and she should not become a "trampling voter at the ballot box." John T. Sloan of Richland said that woman suffrage was a joke in South Carolina and that it would be adopted only when the arch-angels proclaimed the end of time. T. I. Rogers of Marlboro and Brown B. McWhite of Florence insisted that South Carolina women did not want to vote while J. P. K. Bryan of Charleston feared that enfranchisement would "unsex" them. Jasper Talbert of Edgefield said that he was "absolutely opposed to female suffrage, on any account, or in any way" and urged that the Clayton resolution be killed "once and for all time."<sup>52</sup>

The Columbia *State* urged the adoption of the Clayton proposal as an act of justice toward tax-paying women and as a safeguard against possible Negro domination.<sup>53</sup> When the vote was taken, however, it was defeated by a count of 26 ayes and 121 nays.<sup>54</sup> This defeat crushed the hopes of the suffragists. As a last endeavor, J. A. Sligh of Newberry moved that the convention empower the General Assembly to enfranchise property-holding women at any time after January, 1898.<sup>55</sup> Upon the motion of E. J. Kennedy of Chesterfield, Sligh's proposal was tabled by a vote of 99 to 42.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Columbia *State*, October 29, 30, 1895. Charleston *News and Courier*, October 29, 30, 1895. Abbeville *Press and Banner*, November 6, 1895. During the debate, a petition in behalf of woman's enfranchisement was placed before the convention. It was signed by thirty-nine women of Barnwell County. Mrs. Young's name headed the list.

<sup>51</sup> Charleston *News and Courier*, October 30, 1895.

<sup>52</sup> Columbia *State*, October 29, 30, 1895. Charleston *News and Courier*, October 30, 1895. Abbeville *Press and Banner*, November 6, 1895.

<sup>53</sup> Columbia *State*, October 29, 1895.

<sup>54</sup> *Convention Journal*, 1895, p. 422.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 424.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.* On September 14, 1895, a resolution to permit women to vote in municipal elections was introduced and referred to the Committee on Municipal Corporations and Police Regulations. The Committee took no action on it.

The South Carolina campaign of 1895 failed for several reasons. The suffragists had based their hopes on the dual-appeal of justice and expediency. Since their philosophy lacked wide-spread support, they could not realistically expect to gain the vote as a matter of simple justice. They thought that their potential usefulness in achieving white supremacy might furnish an entering wedge. But there were other means of ensuring white supremacy, and the convention preferred them to votes-for-women. The *News and Courier* commented that the convention had decided that men were competent to run the government and that voting in South Carolina was for males only.<sup>57</sup>

After the constitutional convention, interest in woman suffrage declined. A few dedicated believers, such as Mrs. Young, continued to crusade, however. In January, 1896, she attended the National American Woman Suffrage Association's annual convention in Washington. While there, she was one of a group of women who addressed the Woman Suffrage Committee of the United States Senate. She spoke in favor of enfranchisement with property and educational qualifications, which would, in her opinion, relieve the "strained and uneasy relations between the races" in her native state.<sup>58</sup> Upon her return to South Carolina, she appealed to the legislature for presidential suffrage for women. She addressed that body on this subject, but no bill to confer it was introduced.<sup>59</sup>

In February, 1898, Mrs. Young attended the N. A. W. S. A. convention in Washington. In South Carolina she continued to distribute literature and publish articles in newspapers, especially the *Fairfax Enterprise*, of which she was now editor. She spoke before the ERA Club in Charleston. The ERA Club was a soft-spoken woman's rights group that took its name from the initials of the Equal Rights Association.<sup>60</sup> Its president was Claudia Gordon Tharin.<sup>61</sup>

In November, 1899, the South Carolina Equal Rights Association held a two-day convention in Charleston. Its featured speaker was Miss Frances Griffin of Alabama. In her address, Miss Griffin refuted the

<sup>57</sup> Charleston *News and Courier*, October 30, 1895.

<sup>58</sup> United States Senate Document No. 157, pp. 19-20, 54th Congress, 1st Session.

<sup>59</sup> South Carolina *House Journal*, 1896, p. 257. South Carolina *Senate Journal*, 1896, p. 139.

<sup>60</sup> *Woman's Journal*, XXVIII (July 24, 1897), p. 239. NAWSA *Proceedings*, 1899, p. 116. The ERA Club had been organized in 1895.

<sup>61</sup> Miss Tharin was also secretary of the South Carolina Equal Rights Association.

validity of the arguments against woman suffrage. Other convention speakers were Mrs. Young, Miss Tharin, and Mrs. Maria Prentiss.<sup>62</sup>

Mrs. Young, Martha Schofield, and Claudia and May Tharin represented South Carolina at the National Association's annual convention in Washington in 1900. While there, Mrs. Young made a speech in which she compared the southern suffragists to Margaret Brent who asked to vote in the Assembly in seventeenth century Maryland.<sup>63</sup> In Minneapolis, in 1901, Mrs. Young was the only delegate from South Carolina. She was accompanied by Claudia and May Tharin at the 1902 convention in Washington, however.

Through the initiative of Mrs. Young, bills to confer presidential and municipal suffrage on tax-paying women were introduced in the South Carolina legislature in 1902. On the evening of January 31st, she spoke before a joint session of both houses in their behalf. She was offered the speaker's stand, but chose instead to deliver her address from the floor of the House chamber. In this way, Mrs. Young became the first woman to speak from the "floor of the House" on "an exact equality with her brother man."<sup>64</sup> Her eloquence was lost on the Assembly, however, for both bills failed to receive favorable committee reports.<sup>65</sup>

In February, 1902, the suffragists held a conference in Charleston as a feature of that city's Inter-State and West Indian Exposition. This two-day meeting was arranged through the cooperation of J. C. Hemphill, editor of the *News and Courier* and chairman of the Exposition's Committee on Promotion and Publicity.<sup>66</sup> At a series of sessions during a period of two days, about fifty women and a few men heard speeches by Carrie Chapman Catt and Henry B. Blackwell of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, Helen Morris Lewis of North Carolina, and Katherine Koch and Mary F. Wynn of Georgia.<sup>67</sup>

In March, 1903, Mrs. Young attended the annual convention of the National Association in New Orleans. While there, she discussed suffrage work in South Carolina in a speech entitled "From the Most Conserva-

<sup>62</sup> NAWSA *Proceedings*, 1900, p. 88. *Charleston News and Courier*, November 23, 1899.

<sup>63</sup> Stanton, Anthony, *Woman Suffrage*, IV, 363.

<sup>64</sup> NAWSA. *Proceedings*, 1902, pp. 88-89.

<sup>65</sup> *South Carolina Senate Journal*, 1902, p. 242. *South Carolina House Journal*, 1902, p. 332.

<sup>66</sup> John Calvin Hemphill was a brother of Robert Hemphill of Abbeville. Unlike his brother, however, he was personally opposed to woman suffrage.

<sup>67</sup> *Charleston News and Courier*, February 4, 1902. Stanton, Anthony, *Woman Suffrage*, V, 35. South Carolinians who spoke at the conference were Young, Tharin, Prentiss, and Robert R. Hemphill.

tive State.”<sup>68</sup> The New Orleans meeting was the last national convention that Mrs. Young attended. Three years later, in 1906, she died, and with her passing ended the first phase of the movement in South Carolina.<sup>69</sup>

The record of these early years was in many ways impressive. An Equal Rights Association had been organized. Literature had been distributed and speeches made. Several bills had been brought before the legislature and an energetic effort had been made to gain the franchise at the constitutional convention of 1895. The movement failed to gain wide-spread support, however, and owed its existence to the determination and dedication of a few individuals. The most outstanding of these was Mrs. Young.

After her death, reports from South Carolina disappeared from the records of the National American Woman Suffrage Association. The South Carolina Equal Rights Association disintegrated, and the movement in the state became dormant.<sup>70</sup>

It was revived in 1914 with the organization of the South Carolina Equal Suffrage Association. This new organization soon surpassed the earlier one in membership and general acceptance. In terms of achievement, however, it was no more successful. Its bills failed in the legislature, and when the Susan B. Anthony Amendment was submitted to the states, the suffragists could not persuade the General Assembly to ratify. South Carolina women finally gained the vote in 1920 after Tennessee's ratification made the Nineteenth Amendment a part of the United States Constitution.

<sup>68</sup> Stanton, Anthony, *Woman Suffrage*, V, 69.

<sup>69</sup> The movement lost another staunch supporter in the death of Robert R. Hemphill in 1906.

<sup>70</sup> Mrs. Young was buried in Fairfax. Her grave was marked by a monument which bore the following inscription: "She climbed the heights and held aloft the torch of liberty for her sex."