

VALIANT MARYLAND WOMEN: THE FIGHT FOR SUFFRAGE

Elizabeth R. Drenner Menefee

1879-1944 Allegany County

Menefee moved to Cumberland upon marriage. She became an ardent worker for women's enfranchisement and the county's first woman registrar. Upon winning the right to vote she promptly ran for office, but lost to Mary E. W. Risteau (the first Harford County woman in the House of Delegates). At a time when there were "few political appointments held by women at any time in this community," she served as the state Democratic National Committee representative throughout the 1930s, among other civic and community positions.



Catherine Sweet

1880-Date Unverified Garrett County

As a young widow in Ohio, Sweet was denied rights to her property and guardianship of her child, making her a lifelong woman suffragist. She moved to Loch Lynn Heights in Garrett County and re-married. The town charter stated that "all persons" were entitled to vote. In the first election in 1896, Sweet went to the polls believing, as a "person," she had the right to vote. The judges turned her away. Sweet did not become the first Maryland woman to vote in a municipal election. Her angry first-hand story was published in *The Baltimore Sun*.



Dr. Lorilla Bullard Tower

1870-1963 Garrett County

Born in 1870 in West Virginia, Dr. Tower practiced medicine for ten years before marrying and moving to Garrett County. Local stories abound about her work to empower women for social reform and suffrage. She held many executive positions in community organizations and was president of the Oakland Women's Civic Club in 1914 when the JGL hiked through Garrett County. After the amendment ratification, Dr. Tower worked with Madeleine Ellicott, founder of the Maryland League of Women Voters, and was active in the Maryland State Federation of Republican Women.

Julia Slocum Walker Ruhl

1861-1956 Garrett County

Ruhl was West Virginia Equal Rights Suffrage Association President and very well-known. She helped unite groups in the West Virginia referendum and national campaigns. Ruhl's family spent summers at their Mountain Lake Park cottage in Garrett County and were active in the Methodist Church's Chautauqua movement. There, she continued her suffrage work, supported by other Methodist deaconesses, with meetings, speeches and writings. *The Clarksburg Telegram* published a cheering message to West Virginia suffragists written from her home in Mountain Lake Park in 1916.



Florence Trail 1854-1944 Frederick County

The Trail sisters joined the suffrage movement in 1910 when the Just Government League organized a Frederick chapter. Florence, an accomplished author, musician and educator, was for many years the chapter's president. At their shared home, the Trail sisters held parlor and lawn meetings featuring prominent suffrage speakers. Soon after the 19th Amendment was ratified in 1920, Bertha (1864-1940) gave a lecture to the Women's Republican Club of Thurmont on "how and why" women should vote. She became a county Republican committee vice-chair.



Advocacy on the Road

In July 1913, suffragists from across the state and country drove to Hyattsville carrying petitions asking Congress to give women the right to vote. After a rally, an auto procession traveled to Washington, D.C.

