FIFTY YEARS OLD
And Proud of It

1920
LWV
1970

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF PENNSYLVANIA
The League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania acknowledges with gratitude the contribution of Miss Laura Lou Brookman who did the research and the writing of this History.
FIFTY YEARS OLD

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The League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania Looks Back to 1920 and on to the Future

PHILADELPHIA • 1970
WHAT they really did was give the baby a new name.

This little one was no babe in arms, but a sturdy toddler who had been kicking, cooing and making sizeable progress for almost a year. Christened “Pennsylvania League of Women Citizens” in November, 1919, the infant’s name was changed—as had been intended all along—when, by enactment of the 19th Amendment to the federal Constitution, the “citizens” became voters on August 26, 1920, and the Pennsylvania League of Women Citizens thereby became officially the Pennsylvania League of Women Voters.

What a year of excitement!

“Did you hear the horns a-blowing and the bells ring in your city?” asked Constance Drexel, special correspondent for the Philadelphia Public Ledger, in Chicago on February 13, 1920. Two thousand women from all 48 states were gathered there for the last Convention of the National American Woman Suffrage Association.

The amendment had been ratified by 31 states: 36 were necessary to make it law. When Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt, the gentle-eyed, silver-haired president of the Association, read telegrams from the Governors of New Mexico and Oklahoma, saying their legislatures, in special sessions, were certain to ratify the amendment within a few days and that three more governors were calling their legislatures together for the same purpose, the celebration was on.

“We can do as was done with the Armistice—celebrate twice,” Mrs. Catt said.

The ballroom of the Congress Hotel where the delegates were
assembled exploded into a hubbub. As Miss Drexel described it, “Each state delegation—Pennsylvania with its 32 members making a very good showing—took up its banners and paraded around the hall, bells ringing and horns blowing.” The horns were yellow, the banners were yellow and a huge yellow bell, suspended from the balcony ceiling, began to descend, pealing forth “in riotous joy.”

The thirty-two women from Pennsylvania included eight from Philadelphia: Mrs. George A. Pieris, Miss Emma Klahr, Miss Lida Stokes Adams, Miss Helen Fogg, Miss Frances Gebhart, Dr. C. L. C. Douglass, Dr. Ellen C. Potter and Mrs. Harriet L. Hubbs.

There were also eight from Pittsburgh: Mrs. John O. Miller, Mrs. Clifton Verner, Mrs. W. W. Ramsey, Mrs. A. G. Holmes, Mrs. Nathaniel Stear, Mrs. Alexander P. Moore, Mrs. A. M. Fuller and Mrs. William Ross.

Among the others were: Mrs. Gifford Pinchot, Milford; Mrs. Thomas Ross, Doylestown; Mrs. E. E. Klerman, Somerset; Mrs. E. F. H. McCauley and Mrs. Forrest G. Morehead, Beaver; Mrs. Richard Wood, Irwin; Miss Mary and Miss Nannie Lee, Sharon; Mrs. C. C. Hoag, Haverford; Mrs. Francis P. Maxwell, Lansdowne; and Mrs. Frank Barber, Swarthmore.

All of these women had worked hard and long, using brains, energy, ingenuity—with good looks and good humor thrown in—to bring about this victory.

And now it had come—but not quite.

In Chicago, the morning after that celebration amid the din of horns and ringing bells, the delegates settled down to their real work, which was disbanding the National American Woman Suffrage Association, since its goal was in sight, and transforming it into a new organization with a new name.

Speedily this was done. A new constitution was adopted. Officers were elected, with Mrs. Maud Wood Park heading the list as president. And thus the National League of Women Voters was born.

But the “women citizens,” returning to their homes from that Convention, were still not voters. Ratification of the 19th amendment came to a sputtering slowdown and stalled. Spring passed and stretched on into summer. Finally, on August 18, the vote in the 36th state Legislature was tallied and Philadelphia newspaper headlines proclaimed:
near-consternation,” a newspaper reporter who was present wrote, as some 500 women received pointed answers to the questions they placed before the officials.

The registration procedures which Mr. Quin was attempting to explain to 500 women were certainly complicated.

First, prospective voters were told, they must be assessed, and two days had been set when assessors would be on duty for this purpose. Registration would come next, with three dates when registrars would be at the polling places between the hours of 7 a.m. and 1 p.m. and again between 4 and 10 p.m. Before registering, however, a poll tax of 50 cents must be paid.

Property owners who could show a receipt for taxes paid within the last two years need not pay a poll tax. If a husband and wife owned property in the husband’s name, he could register on the tax receipt, but she must pay a poll tax. If the property was in the wife’s name, the husband must pay a poll tax. If the property was jointly owned, the tax receipt would permit both to register. The only exceptions to all this were for those over 21 and not yet 22. These young men and young women would be permitted to vote “on age” and need not be assessed.

Also every voter, in registering, must give his or her name, address, date of birth and approximate weight and height. This descriptive information, it was explained, was the state’s means of preventing fraudulent voting.

Throughout the state, members of the Pennsylvania League of Women Citizens began setting up similar meetings, telephoning, writing letters, trying to get the facts about the election laws to their members and to their neighbors. The Executive Committee of the League met and, according to the secretary’s minutes, “Encouraging reports on organization were given by the representatives of McKean, Allegheny, Lycoming, Chester and Philadelphia Counties.”

Then, catching their breath from all this activity, it seemed time for the women who had worked so hard for it to celebrate their glorious victory—time, too, for them to put on their new voters’ bonnets and step out as the Pennsylvania League of Women Voters.

And so they did.

On Saturday afternoon, September 25, men and women and children dressed in their best came crowding into Independence Square in Philadelphia where high on a platform, hung “the

Justice Bell,” replica of the Liberty Bell except for the crack. Celebrities began to arrive and were applauded. Then, as the crowd increased, pressing forward to see better, the doors of Independence Hall opened and through them slowly came 48 pretty girls in white dresses.

Each girl, like so many candidates for Miss America, wore a green ribbon with the name of a state. Flag-bearers and little girls with baskets of yellow flowers went before them. Then the Goddess of Justice appeared, her Grecian robe stirring softly behind her as she moved to the bell and unchained the clapper. Someone seized the bell rope and set the “Justice Bell” to ringing.

Pennsylvanians had seen this bell before, but they had never heard it ring. The bell had toured the state during the suffrage campaign of 1915—the contribution of Mrs. Charles W. Ruchenerberger of Stratford, who paid for its casting. Named “the Justice Bell,” its clapper was tied in 1915 “awaiting the freedom of the women of the state to be freed itself.”

Maud Wood Park, president of the National League of Women Voters, who had come from Washington to address this audience, told them, “We are going to enroll in existing political parties. Make sure your party represents your deliberate choice, but remember that your enrollment in a party is not synonymous with life imprisonment.”

Dr. M. Carey Thomas, president of Bryn Mawr College, paid a tribute to all those who for 50 years had worked to give women the right to vote.

At the end of the afternoon it was generally agreed that the Pennsylvania League of Women Voters had appropriately announced its new status as voters.

Election day in November, 1920, came and went without any notable congestion in the polling places. (Throughout the country, the women’s vote that year was about 26 per cent of those women of voting age.)

November 17 had been set as the date for the first Convention of the Pennsylvania League of Women Voters, to be held in Pittsburgh. The evening before, officers and directors gathered at the home of Mrs. William Rees to plan a legislative program for the coming year. One paragraph from the minutes of that meeting must be regarded as historic:

“It was unanimously agreed to substitute for a mandatory law
providing for two women on every school board, a bill providing for a Constitutional Convention to frame a revision of the State Constitution."

How could they know that, having just celebrated a victory which had taken 50 years, they were setting their sights now on one which was to take 48 more?

WHEN Mrs. Miller tapped her gavel sharply, bringing the Convention to attention on November 18, she faced a group of women, many of whom had come together the year before. Just as the National American Woman Suffrage Association had met in Chicago to disband and reorganize as the League of Women Voters, so the Pennsylvania Woman Suffrage Association in November, 1919, had become the Pennsylvania League of Women Citizens.

The Bylaws of the Pennsylvania League of Women Citizens, adopted in November, 1919, and those of the Pennsylvania League of Women Voters of 1920 are identical except that the Bylaws of 1919 state, "The name of this organization shall be the Pennsylvania League of Women Citizens and the name shall automatically be changed to the Pennsylvania League of Women Voters upon the day when the women of Pennsylvania are legally entitled to vote."

These Bylaws are contained in a little booklet (3½ by 6 inches) of ten pages. Officers were to be a State Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary Treasurer and five Directors. The state Executive Committee included these officers and "County Chairmen of those counties which contain cities of the first and second class, and Chairmen of standing committees." Duties of the nominating committee were specifically described. All other committees were to be appointed by the state Executive Committee.

Members of the organization in each county were to organize a County League of Women Voters, with County Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. At annual meetings of the state League, each county League was to be represented by its county Chairman and one delegate for each 100 members. The Bylaws state that "Any woman who subscribes to the Bylaws of the organization may become a member by sending her name to the county Secretary and paying the annual dues." (They were $1.00.)

The women delegates, meeting in November, 1920, in their first Convention with the new name, League of Women Voters, decided as a first step in "education to increase the effectiveness of women voters and to further better government" to make a careful study of the state's election laws, with no recommenda-
tions for reform until the study was complete. (Fifty years later this is still the League’s practice.)

In the coming session of the legislature, they agreed to work for passage of four measures: an increased appropriation for mothers’ pensions; a salary schedule for schoolteachers which had been prepared by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction; reorganization of the state’s departments and commissions in the interest of economy; and a state budget system.

Mrs. Miller was reelected state Chairman. A ready and witty public speaker, Lucy Miller had proved to be a resourceful, energetic leader. She had been president of the Pennsylvania Woman Suffrage Association for six years. (“My advice to anyone going into this work,” she had said, “is to develop the skin of a rhinoceros.”) She was a Vassar graduate, class of 1902, the daughter of Julian Kennedy, a mining engineer, and she had a family of two daughters and one son.

Addressing the Convention after her election, Mrs. Miller said, “Let’s get right down to brass tacks and study conditions at our own back doors.” Then she advised city and county Leagues to form committees which would visit police courts, sessions of city council, meetings of county commissioners and school boards to learn how these groups operate and to inform themselves about community problems. “We must not go in a spirit of criticism,” she warned, “but with encouragement for all that is good and with constructive help to remedy defects.”

Other officers elected were: Mrs. Lewis L. Smith of Stratford, vice chairman; Miss Martha G. Thomas of Whitford, treasurer; Mrs. Charles Stewart Wurtz of Philadelphia, secretary; and the following directors: Mrs. Charles W. Clement, Sunbury; Miss Henrietta B. Lyon, Williamsport; Mrs. E. H. McCauley, Beaver County; Mrs. S. E. Walker, Warren County; and Mrs. E. E. Kiernan, Somerset.

The Pennsylvania League had been working energetically to increase its membership. Well aware that there were many women with little idea how their local communities were governed, the League held “Efficiency in Government” meetings, with public officials on hand to answer questions. They also introduced “Citizenship Schools.” An account of one of these, reported in the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin, deserves to be reproduced in full—headlines included:

URGES WOMEN JOIN “LEAST BAD” PARTY

“Hold Your Noses But Go In”
Citizenship School Is Told
By Its Founder

“You women citizens of Pennsylvania are going to align yourselves with some political party. Will it be the best? There is none. Make up your minds which is the least bad, hold your noses and go in.”

This was the humorous but earnest advice today of Mrs. Nancy Schoonmaker before members of the Philadelphia League of Women Voters at the third session of the Citizenship School in Witherspoon Hall. Mrs. Schoonmaker, who votes in New York, is the originator of the schools.

“If you don’t like that party, get out and pick another one,” she said.

“Neither the Democratic nor Republican party has been faithful to the principles they profess to believe. In point of worth, there is as much difference between them as Tweedledum and Tweedledee but it is good to have two because, when one gets so bad you can’t stand it, you can join the other.”

The League also began a series of inter-county conferences. In January, 1921, representatives of twelve eastern counties met in Philadelphia and, according to a press report, “All left with strengthened determination to carry on the fight for good government.” During the morning session there were five-minute reports by these county chairmen: Bucks, Mrs. Thomas Ross; Berks, Mrs. William M. Boyer; Adams, Mrs. Mary E. Peters; Chester, Mrs. Walter Wright; Cumberland, Miss Margaret Moore; Delaware, Mrs. E. Y. Hartshorne; Montgomery, Mrs. Herman T. Schawrs; Northampton, Mrs. T. S. Fillmore; Philadelphia, Miss Sarah D. Lowrie; and Pike, Mrs. Russell Nyce.

Mrs. Fillmore, Northampton Chairman, spoke out against a movement to exempt women from jury duty. Others applauded loudly when she said, “We don’t want discriminatory legislation. We have obtained the privilege to vote and we want the duties and responsibilities as well.”
That fall the National League in Washington had joined with ten other national women's organizations to work for legislation which all of them considered of importance to women. The Pennsylvania League, following this example, undertook to maintain a joint lobby in Harrisburg with other women's organizations in the state, pooling their resources as the Pennsylvania Council of Women.

Mrs. Lyman D. Gilbert opened her home on Front Street in Harrisburg as legislative headquarters for the League. Members were on duty as observers throughout the session and a weekly legislative letter was sent out to every League.

Headquarters at Mrs. Gilbert's home was more than an information center. When a bill was introduced authorizing a referendum on the question of a new State Constitution, Mrs. Clarence Renshaw, vice chairman of the Democratic State Committee, was one of those on hand to work for its passage. In reviewing her initial experiences as a lobbyist, Mrs. Renshaw wrote:

"The nicest adventures of all, I believe, had nothing to do with Legislative halls. They were those hours when we gathered in the dining room at League Headquarters and ate delicious asparagus, coaxed by Miss Thomas from the soil of Chester County, and said what we thought about representatives and senators and other high officials, and it was rather startling to note how frequently the Democratic and Republican points of view were identical."

League members were jubilant in May when the bill for a statewide vote on the question of calling a Constitutional Convention was passed. The bill provided that the question should be on the ballot in the September primary.

Glowing with this momentous success, Mrs. Miller, speaking for the League, announced they had been victorious on "every measure on our program." Bills for increasing mothers' assistance and higher pay for teachers had been passed. Of the other objectives urged by the League—reorganization of state departments and commissions and a state budget system—she said, "Passage of the referendum for a new Constitution covers them."

Later, with more time to think over what had happened, Mrs. Miller said that the League's chief battle in the months ahead would be for the Constitutional Convention.

From January first to the primary election on September 20 was a busy time for the Pennsylvania League. A 4-page folder, browned with age now, entitled "Short History of the Varied Activities of the Pennsylvania League of Women Voters, 1920-21," tells of meetings in every county (some at county fairs), explaining the need to revise the state constitution. The League distributed 56,000 folders of Questions and Answers on the Constitutional Convention. Every daily session of the legislature and all important hearings had been attended by two League observers. The League had also mailed out 500 correspondence lessons on township, borough, county and city government in Pennsylvania and 100 manuals on citizenship. State Board members had addressed more than 300 county meetings and Citizenship Schools of six lessons each were conducted in many counties.

When September 20 arrived and votes in the primary election were counted there were 518,889 opposed to calling a Constitutional Convention and 419,191 in favor.

In reporting the outcome of the election, the League's Bulletin commented that a shift of only 50,000 votes would have won approval for the measure. When League members assembled for their second Convention in December, 1921, at the Sterling Hotel in Wilkes-Barre, a resolution was adopted, placing the League once more behind the movement for revision of the state constitution.

Mrs. Miller, in her address at the opening session, said, "The Constitutional Convention seems to me very much like the suffrage amendment, something that must be worked for until it is accomplished."

But no enthusiastic group, expanding its membership and its horizons, can go for long without differences of opinion. These bristled when delegates got down to a discussion of political activities. Should the League remain nonpartisan? If so, just how nonpartisan?

A statement of the Pennsylvania League of Women Voters the year before had read:

"The League of Women Voters is all-partisan; its members are free to join the political party of their choice. Political parties in this and all other countries are forced to adapt their platforms to an appeal for votes and in consequence they are rendered conservative and slow-moving. An outside group, nonpartisan, unpartisan and all-partisan, will be able to agitate and educate without fear or favor in
behalf of needed changes in our fundamental system. . . .
It is hoped and believed that all political parties will adopt the program of the League of Women Voters as part of their own platforms.

Now, at the Convention in Wilkes-Barre, a resolution was introduced to allow endorsement of candidates for governor in the spring and for local candidates by local organizations in the fall.

Mrs. Edward Jordan of Delaware County argued vigorously for the resolution. "The country is drunk with power and corruption," she said. "I believe the League will eventually have to resolve itself into a political organization of men and women voters to fight common evils."

Mrs. H. S. Prentiss Nichols of Philadelphia disagreed, insisting that the success of the League depended on remaining independent. Mrs. Miller, of the same opinion, urged the League to remain "nonpartisan, unpartisan, all partisan."

On a vote, the resolution failed. The League would still be nonpartisan with these exceptions: candidates for party committeeman, school director or poor director could be endorsed by local Leagues.

More heated discussion came when Mrs. Edward Y. Hartshorne, another Delaware County delegate, took the floor to describe how difficult it was for the League to survive in that county.

"Conditions in the city of Chester alone are so notorious they beggar description," she said. "The officials there could doubtless give points to Sodom and Gomorrah. Philadelphia crooks, driven from there, select Chester for their activities because it is understood 'police protection' may be obtained if sufficient money is forthcoming weekly to certain well-known persons who stand in with the politicians on the one hand and certain city-paid officials."

"Drunkenness on the police force is common gossip and nearly every department of public affairs in the county is touched by the stain of politics, whisky and graft."

Delaware County brought up the problem of nonpartisanship again in 1922 when that League appealed to the state Board to be allowed to endorse Mrs. Florence L. Dornblaser as Democratic candidate for the legislature in the Second District. Republican women, representing all groups and affiliations in the county, were just as eager to have a woman representative in Harrisburg. The Board, thus confronted, refused all requests.

The issue was settled and League policy of nonpartisanship firmly established when Governor Gifford Pinchot signed the charter incorporating the Pennsylvania League of Women Voters as a purely educational organization. The signing took place in Harrisburg, November 27, 1923, and the pen which the Governor used was presented to Mrs. Lyman D. Gilbert, whose home had been League headquarters during the legislative sessions.

As an educational body, the League could not endorse candidates for any office. Its purpose was "to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government."

It was the beginning of an adventure in education for members of the League, for many Pennsylvanians who were not members and—in some cases—for the candidates, too.

A FIRST step toward developing the Voters Guide came in 1922. Agitation for repeal of Pennsylvania's direct primary act was beginning to be heard in some areas. The League's Executive Board discussed this at their November meeting. They decided to ask all Leagues in the state to interview those in their localities who would be candidates in the May primary, questioning them whether they were for or against the primary law.

Voters Service—for which the League is so widely known today—had its beginnings in the very first days after the 19th Amendment had become law and the Pennsylvania League held public meetings to tell women how to register and to explain to them the mechanics of voting.

Citizenship Schools, meetings where public officials told how local and state government operates, the campaigns to get out the vote, and reports during Legislative sessions on the progress of measures which were before the lawmakers all extended the scope of Voters Service. Today anyone who wants impartial information on candidates, platforms and issues can turn to the League of Women Voters and get it.

A feature of Voters Service in the spring of 1922 was the "Straw Vote Primary" staged at a state-wide conference in Phil-
adelphia. There were still too many women who did not know how to mark and cast ballots and did not understand the working of the primary. A polling booth was set up in the ballroom of the Bellevue-Stratford and Philadelphia officials were on hand to carry out their duties in the “Straw Vote Primary” just as they would on election day.

A press announcement from the League stated that “Women voters in each district in the state will be supplied with information as to the stand of the candidates for the legislature on the question of the direct primary.”

There were more questions for the candidates at a luncheon which was part of the same conference—a campaign luncheon at which opposing candidates from both the Republican and Democratic parties spoke from the same platform and, in fact, sat at the same table, chatting pleasantly before and after those talks. This was a new kind of “political rally” for Philadelphia. Now, too, in the country as a whole until the League of Women Voters introduced it. Today such Candidate Meetings are a League trademark.

More than a thousand women “and a few intrepid males” came to the luncheon at the Bellevue-Stratford. What the League members wanted to know from each candidate was whether he would work for a Constitutional Convention, if he favored a budget system for the state, and how he thought funds should be provided for increasing teachers’ salaries. Should it be by reducing other state appropriations or by new taxes?

The Philadelphia Public Ledger's reporter wrote: “The seekers for office were on parade and they knew it. The women knew it and, although their attitude was kind, it was critical.”

That summer the Lower Merion Township League introduced a “Know Your Own Township” tour and raised funds for Citizenship Schools held simultaneously in three centers. The Delaware County League was one that had a “Know Your Own County” tour.

A sampling of reports from other Leagues shows how all of them were working for membership, for funds or to become better-informed voters.

In Bucks County there were two picnics with combined attendance of 1,800. Every township was represented and the picnics were so successful financially that there were plans to repeat them. The Chester County League had held monthly meetings through the summer with good attendance. They also took part in a tri-county meeting at Honeybrook and had a booth at the West Chester Fair where visitors could stop to rest—and perhaps join the League.

In Montgomery County the chairman was at work summarizing reports of activities during the primaries, based on questionnaires she had sent to local chairmen. Erie County had good reports of their candidates’ meetings. And, in keeping with the summer season, members of the Allegheny County League had staged a picnic, lawn parties, several outdoor meetings and a rummage sale.

When the Executive Board of the League held its October session Mrs. Miller had a more unusual suggestion for plumping the League’s treasury. There had been so much difficulty in finding suitable polling places in Allegheny County, she said, that she and two other League members had offered the use of their garages. The rental, $60 per year for each polling place, had been turned over to the League treasurer. She hoped other garages could be enrolled for the League.

In 1923 eight women went to Harrisburg as members of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. They were: Mrs. Martha C. Speiser, Philadelphia; Miss Helen Grimes, Allegheny; Mrs. Rosa S. DeYoung, Philadelphia; Miss Sarah M. Gallagher, Cambria; Miss Alice M. Bentley, Crawford; Mrs. Lillie H. Pitts, Philadelphia; Miss Martha G. Thomas, Chester; and Miss Gertrude McKinney, Butler.

They were the “cover girls,” photographed together, for the May issue of the Bulletin of the Pennsylvania League of Women Voters, which had become an impressive magazine. From the earliest days of the League, there had been a Bulletin—one or two mimeographed sheets and then a small leaflet of four pages. Now it was full-sized, not as bulky as the Saturday Evening Post but with about the same page size. The subscription price was fifty cents a year. (League dues were $1.00.)

The Bulletin’s letters from readers proved to be one of its most entertaining features. For instance, this one from a tax collector addressed to the League’s officers:

Recently I saw by the papers that the bill to repeal the Act of 1834 whereby women could not be imprisoned for non-payment of tax had been defeated. The same article mentioned that you and other prominent ladies would ask for a reconsideration of the bill.
Fifty Years Old and Proud of It

As a tax collector I am very much interested in the repeal of this Act. The first year of female tax (1924) I had no trouble whatever to collect tax. But in 1922 they balked. The County Commissioners emphatically told me that I would have to collect it. How will I do it if I do not have the law?

The amounts assessed against them are insignificant and if I would have the proper law it would be very easy. It will not be necessary to imprison any female in my district, for they will pay if they know the consequences. Besides, if they do not pay taxes they will lose the right to vote. If the 1834 Act is not repealed, many women all over the state will be disfranchised. Therefore, I want to ask you to use your influence and get others interested in the matter and get this bill through.

Another letter, accompanied by “a substantial check” said:

To the Editor: As a subscriber to the Bulletin, I wish to tell you how greatly I value the wonderful work you are doing and, anticipating the difficult task of procuring financial support, I take the liberty of enclosing my check to help defray expenses.

In our estimation the vote of the women is of more value than that of the men, as there is lacking that element of mercenary motive that has caused many men to vote for personal gain rather than the good of the community.

An editorial statement in the Bulletin of April, 1923, succinctly describes the way League members viewed their activities and the spirit which was behind them:

This issue of the Bulletin is larger in its volume of printed matter. The increase in size, however, while it may emphasize, can not increase the importance of the work of the Pennsylvania League of Women Voters. What is this work? It is the spreading of clear and unbiased information about government, local and state. . . The Pennsylvania League of Women Voters has been described as a clearing house for facts and ideas about government, politics and candidates. Its program is to get the facts and then to push
and shove them, if necessary, over the Commonwealth. Facts have the spring of life in them, but the spring must be released.

When the League held its national Convention in Des Moines, Iowa, that month Miss Gertrude Ely of Bryn Mawr was named regional director of the second region of the League, including Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey, Maryland, and New York.

"There are two principles," Miss Ely said after accepting this post, "which I shall vigorously advocate as regional director. The first deals with state freedom from the national organization and the second is the encouragement of organizing the smallest political wards. I have no intention of permitting my duties as regional director to interfere with my work in Lower Merion Township or as chairman of East Bryn Mawr."

There had begun to be a feeling that the League would be stronger and more effective, working independently instead of as part of the Pennsylvania Council of Women. This decision was made at an Executive Board meeting when a resolution was proposed and approved "that the counties be advised that, as the program of the League is so important and its strength has been demonstrated as increasingly great, we should concentrate entirely on the League program and not hold joint meetings with other organizations over whose activities we have no control."

Having set an independent course, the League ambitiously purchased a building at 1725 Spruce Street in Philadelphia for state headquarters, "a combined political workshop and political salon." The Philadelphia League took over the front part of the first floor with a teanroon installed at the rear. Headquarters for the state League was on the second floor. There were also four rooms available for overnight guests, named and furnished in honor of Susan B. Anthony, Dr. Anna Howard Shaw, Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt, and Mary Garrett.

The year 1923 was to set a milestone in women's participation in government in Pennsylvania. Dr. Ellen C. Potter, a member of the League's state Board, was appointed Secretary of the Department of Public Welfare by Governor Gifford Pinchot—the first woman to become a member of a governor's cabinet in this state. Governor Pinchot made four more appointments of League members: Mrs. Ernest Waltz, chairman of the Washing-
risburg during the entire session of the legislature.

Originated meetings where candidates, regardless of party or faction, could present their cases. Only women's organization whose invitations to speak are accepted by candidates of all parties.

Published informative pamphlets, supplying facts for the guidance of women voters.

Originated Citizenship Schools throughout the state. Hundreds have been held under League auspices.

First organization to help women become familiar with jury duty.

First organization to form study committees to visit meetings of municipal and county governing bodies, health boards, welfare boards, school boards and courts.

It seems quite a list of accomplishments for a three-year-old. Membership, too, had been growing. A League publication of March, 1923, reported "active organizations" in 40 counties. Less than a year later the Pennsylvania League was to boast of having 5,000 members.

When the delegates to the 1923 Convention assembled and set to work they outlined an ambitious program of study and action for local Leagues. The next 12 months were to be devoted to these subjects: December, World Court; January, Immigration; February, the Primaries; March, Party Committees; April, Legislative Program; May, County Committeemen; June, Local Courts; July, Department of Public Welfare; August, Outdoor Candidates Meetings; September, Public Schools; October, Annual Meeting; November, Annual Meeting.

But the big issue—the real issue—for 1924 was "Get Out the Vote."

It would be a presidential election year. It would be the year when Pennsylvania would decide whether or not to call a convention to revise its constitution. So the League, in its annual Convention, set itself this task:

Be it resolved by the Pennsylvania League of Women Voters that intensive effort be made to get out at least 75 per cent of the possible vote in the general election.

THE crackle of paper being folded and stuffed into envelopes, the slap, slap of envelopes, stuffed, addressed, stamped, as they piled up in cardboard boxes on the floor, had been going on all morning in the second-floor room, windows open to the sound of Spruce Street traffic.

Four heads—one with the fashionable shingle cut—bent over the work table. The four workers were League volunteers who had undertaken to be the mailing crew. When they finished, there would be 5,000 envelopes, addressed to Pennsylvania League members, on their way to the the post office.
The letters, sent out in May, explained the League’s position on the Constitutional Convention—why this question, to appear on the November ballot, would be important to all Pennsylvania—and outlined plans for “getting out the vote.” It was to be exciting, something new.

Something else that was new was being talked about in the tearoom at 1725 Spruce Street. For the first time women were attending national political conventions as delegates, casting votes for the presidential nominees.

At the Republican convention in Cleveland Mrs. J. Willis Martin of Philadelphia was named chairman of the committee on permanent organization and Mrs. Ella J. Mountz of Clearfield County was a delegate. In New York, where the Democratic convention met, Mrs. Carroll Miller of Pittsburgh delivered one of the second speeches and received one-half vote from a Massachusetts delegate for nomination as president. Mrs. Marie O’Connell of Philadelphia and Mrs. Florence Dornblaser of Delaware County were delegates and Mrs. Frederick E. Drinker was an alternate at large.

Headlines in July warned newspaper readers: “Women Voters Out to Arouse State” and “Radios, Autos to Wake Up Women Voters.” Beneath these headlines readers learned about the Caravan that was to tour the state, promised to be “a most spectacular demonstration.”

For this “Get Out the Vote” effort, men as well as women had volunteered to take part, and were serving on the Central Committee. Among 22 organizations cooperating were the Republican Women of Pennsylvania, the Democratic State Committee, the Pennsylvania State Education Association, the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, the Pennsylvania State Conference of Jewish Women and the Pennsylvania State Federation of Women.

Spectacular the departure of the Caravan certainly was.

While the Philadelphia Police Band played “Stars and Stripes Forever,” three seaplanes from the Navy Yard, circling above Independence Square, bombed the area with cards which read, “To prove my loyalty to my country and state, I promise to go to the polls and vote this year and next.”

Mayor Kendrick of Philadelphia was there to speak during brief ceremonies before the 200 automobiles in line set off on the Caravan’s 1,500-mile journey. Leading off was a truck carrying the “Justice Bell” mounted on a platform which would serve as a stage for outdoor meetings.

Mrs. Charles M. Lea of Devon was director of the Caravan. Fifty cars from Delaware County were under the leadership of Mrs. A. A. Crooks of Norwood. Sixty-five from Montgomery County were headed by Mrs. C. P. Fowler. Mrs. Harry Whitney of Kennett Square and Mrs. H. A. Todd led those from Chester and Bucks Counties. The Philadelphia County con-
tingent was led by Mrs. George H. Wobensmith. It was a noisy procession, according to the newspapers. Doylestown was to be the first overnight stop. Said the Philadelphian Public Ledger: "With sirens and horns calling men and women to their doors and front gates, the Caravan made its way to the Doylestown Country Club where members were assigned to various homes where they would be guests for the night."

The Caravan was greeted at the outskirts of Doylestown by Mrs. Thomas Ross, member of the state Executive Committee, and Mrs. Hugh B. Eastburn, Chairman of the Bucks County League. After dinner at the Country Club, they proceeded to the Court House to hold an open-air meeting on the Court House steps. Under the lights and torches, people gathered to hear Samuel B. Scott of the City Club of Philadelphia stress the nonpartisan appeal, "Vote as you please—but vote."

The 200 automobiles moved on next morning to Easton, Bethlehem and Reading. The Caravan spent the weekend in Harrisburg, where they held a rally on the steps of the state Capitol. At Mechanicsburg later in the day they were welcomed by Miss Margaret Blackburn, chairman of the Cumberland County League, who introduced the speakers. Mechanicsburg had declared a half-holiday in honor of the visitors.

A news reporter identified only by the initials "G.A." put his account of the Caravan’s travels into verse:

There’s a Caravan a-speeding ’round the bonnie Keystone state
And the message it is carrying is indubitably great,
A message it will carry through the years.
It is teaching folks their duty to their country and themselves.
Every public man and measure they must note.
To put comfort in their consciences and produce on their shelves.
The man and woman voter’s got to vote.
Hark, hark, hark, the girls are marching.
For the franchise they’re 200 autos strong
And each auto ought to be inspiration for the free.
Step on the gas and help the work along!

There was also some criticism. The League Bulletin, noting this, found that it had produced some interesting situations. "One was a vain effort to discourage men and women of all parties and various social and civic interests who are taking part in the campaign. The argument used was ‘My goodness, you will get out the undesirable vote,’ " The Bulletin added, "It would be more to the point for those who do not like the ‘undesirable’ to go to the polls and record their views where they will count."

The Caravan set out from Philadelphia on October 1. On November 1 it was back, escorted into the city by 50 automobiles and an honor guard of police. The Caravaners arrived in time to attend a luncheon at the Belleview-Stratford at which Miss Belle Sherwin, president of the National League, was the principal speaker.

Those at the luncheon also heard representatives of the three candidates for the presidency. Miss Zona Gale, the Wisconsin novelist, spoke for Senator Robert M. LaFollette; Mrs. Emily Newell Blair, vice chairman of the Democratic National Committee, for John W. Davis; and Miss Agnes Repplier, the Philadelphia essayist, for Calvin Coolidge.

Election day, November 10, came and brought Calvin Coolidge a sweeping victory of almost two-to-one over his closest rival, John W. Davis. And, in Pennsylvania, the question of calling a Constitutional Convention was answered with an overwhelming vote of "No."

For those who had given so much time and energy to getting out the vote, there was some comfort. Official returns showed that the total Pennsylvania vote was 16 per cent higher than in the preceding presidential election of 1920.

Mrs. John O. Miller, reviewing the defeat of the Constitutional Convention, wrote:

The Convention proposal was defeated by a combination of religious bigotry and machine orders. Protestants were told that the convention would mean state appropriations to parochial schools. Catholics were told that the convention would mean abolition of parochial schools. Last minute lies were told to both... The upwards of 300,000 votes which were polled for the Constitutional Convention constitute a power in the affairs of the Commonwealth which cannot be ignored. They will have to be considered
Fifty Years Old and Proud of It

when a candidate for Governor is chosen two years hence, when we hope to make the Constitutional Convention a paramount issue.

Four days after the election, on November 14, League members were at work on a legislative program to be presented to the next session of the General Assembly. They were meeting in Philadelphia for their annual Convention. The bills which they would support were for improvements in the election laws, a building program for the State Department of Welfare, revision of the tax assessment system, and establishment of courts of domestic relations. They also supported the federal Child Labor Amendment which had not yet become law.

Officers elected at this Convention were: Mrs. John O. Miller of Pittsburgh, chairman; Miss Martha G. Thomas of Whitford, first vice chairman; Mrs. Herman L. Schwartz of Wynnewood, second vice chairman; Mrs. Robert C. Brooks of Swarthmore, third vice president; Mrs. William E. Bailey of Harrisburg, fourth vice chairwoman; Mrs. Francis R. Strawbridge of Germantown, secretary; and Mrs. George Vaux, Jr., of Bryn Mawr, treasurer.

The directors were: Miss Gertrude Ely, Bryn Mawr; Mrs. Charles M. Lea, Devon; Miss Henrietta B. Lyon, Williamsport; Mrs. E.S.H. McCauley, Beaver; Mrs. Walter T. Merrick, Wellsboro; Miss Jane W. Pressly, Erie; Miss Marion Reilly, Philadelphia; Mrs. Thomas Ross, Doylestown; Mrs. Ernest Waltz, Washington; Mrs. B. Pier Wright, Erie, and Mrs. William Wright, Harrisburg.

FOUR years earlier the League had undertaken to study the Pennsylvania election laws, making no recommendations for changes until the study had been completed. Now they had studied and they also had some lessons from experience. Now they were ready.

At Harrisburg, in the coming session of the legislature, the League would work for abolition of the poll tax as a qualification for voting; a bill to strengthen the "assistance to voters" clause in the election law (to prevent party workers from entering the polling booths to "assist" voters who did not want help); a law
to permit a recount of votes when fraud was suspected; voting machines to take the place of paper ballots.

The League *Bulletin* reported an even more serious lack in the state election laws:

The effort which was made by various groups this fall to protect the primary ballot disclosed numerous flaws in the law controlling elections other than those which have been before the last two or three Legislatures. There is no law which demands that ballot boxes be kept locked during the balloting.

In December, 1925, Governor Pinchot appointed Mrs. John O. Miller to be a member of the State Commission of 76 to consider changes in the election laws. When this Commission met, Mrs. Miller was chosen as a member of the executive committee of 11, the working body of the Commission.

She spoke out emphatically in her annual report at the League's 1926 Convention. "The outstanding need in Pennsylvania is reform of the election laws," Mrs. Miller said. She questioned the outcome of the last election if voting machines had been used, and accused "the organization" of giving voters thousands of tax receipts.

"The Republican organization," she said, "buys thousands of tax receipts to hand out to voters. They admit they do it in Allegheny County and see no wrong in it."

At the League's national Convention, held in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1926, it became evident that women voters in other states were working on the same problem—improving their election laws. Mrs. Charles M. Lea of Devon, a member of the Pennsylvania League's Executive Board, spoke to the Convention, discussing "How To Get Women On Election Boards." There were talks, too, on how to prevent fraudulent voting, how to facilitate registration of qualified voters and how to make registration less costly.

One action of this national Convention was to amend the Bylaws, providing for biennial instead of annual Conventions.

The Pennsylvania League had become concerned about taxes also—specifically, the way in which taxes were collected. The general practice was for tax collectors to be paid by fees instead of by salary, and for each tax—schools, roads, welfare, etc.—there was a separate fee. There was also a fee for collecting county taxes and another for city taxes and (higher than any other) a fee for collecting delinquent taxes.

Philadelphia County, with a central collection system, was the exception. The League *Bulletin* pointed out that it cost five times as much to collect local and county taxes in Lackawanna County as in Philadelphia, and seven times as much as the collection of similar taxes in Ohio, where the fee system had been abolished.

The League's comparison was not based on guessing. After the Schantz Bill, a measure for fairer assessment and more economical tax collection, had been twice defeated in the Legislature, the Pennsylvania League set for itself the task of finding out exactly how much tax collection was costing and why.

In each county, League members sought out the records and compiled figures. The Lycoming County survey, the first to be completed, showed that the cost of collecting all local and county taxes in the preceeding year, 1924, had been $45,494.62. Commenting on this report, the Philadelphia *Public Ledger* said:

"The survey is something new in Pennsylvania. Never before has an attempt been made to present to the people of each county a complete resume of what they are paying in taxes, what their money is used for, what it costs to collect taxes, and how their situation compares with contiguous counties."

It has been disclosed that gross political abuses exist in many boroughs, all of which add to the cost of taxation. One particular abuse is the practice in some districts of permissive exoneration or "forgiveness of taxes," which practice is generally used for political purposes, and, in some instances, has been sufficient to control elections.

The Pittsburgh *Sun*, in an editorial, said, "As the League of Women Voters gains experience, it manifests increasing courage and independence, whether dealing with local, state or national concerns."

League members were becoming more knowledgeable about other phases of political life. Mrs. Quincy W. Hershey, chairman of the Councilmanic committee of Allegheny County, put it plainly in her report at an inter-county conference where representatives came from the Leagues of Allegheny, Armstrong,
Beaver, Washington, Blair, Jefferson, Erie, Mercer, and Lawrence counties.

Mrs. Hershey said:

The first year or two after women secured the vote, women were appointed to fill minor political places and the bosses thought these appointments would serve as an anesthetic and the women would be assimilated into the machine.

Some women thought, as they were in the party organization, they apparently had the same rights as men, but they soon discovered that when appointments or nominations were being considered, the women were not asked how many places women could fill. Sometimes when the party leaders had decided that a woman should be named, the place was filled by them for political purposes, just as they had been in the past, and frequently a woman who was appointed because she was the wife or sister of a boss was no better than the man who preceded her.

For all these reasons, Mrs. Hershey declared, the women were recovering from the anesthetic and holding up their heads to ask why these things had to continue.

Getting out the vote in every election—a bigger vote—had been, from the earliest days of the League, one of its foremost objectives. The Chester County League put wit and originality to work before the fall election when they persuaded a local newspaper to reserve space every day for a month for their “Get Out the Vote” slogans. League members provided a new one every day. Here are some of them:

“A little voting is a dangerous thing—all out for the polls.”

“You can’t keep the books or pay the County’s bills. But you can vote for County Controller.”

“Why feel sorry after the polls close?”

League membership was growing. In 1927 there were 9,488 members, compared with 5,000 in 1924. A picture of the activities—and some of the problems—of the local Leagues is reflected in their replies to questionnaires sent to all the Leagues in the state. Mrs. E. Page Allison, chairman of the Survey Committee, summed up the answers in her report:

1. Outline in some detail your proposed program of work for the next three months.
   Answer: The programs differ slightly but the significant fact is that they are confined for the most part to candidates’ meetings, study of local and county government and of elections.

2. How do you finance your League?
   Answer: Most of the money is raised by card parties, bakes, rummage sales, festivals etc. in addition to dues. The Leagues say that ‘high class lecture courses’ are failures except in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia.

3. How frequently do you hold lectures or current topic meetings?
   Answer: The meetings vary from one a month to none. Many Leagues combine current topics with report meetings. Some think report meetings utterly useless.

4. Do your Board and other members fully recognize the importance of genuine nonpartisanship?
   Answer: Most Leagues say that their Boards value nonpartisanship but some think the membership does not.

That same year the League had some victories to chalk up. As the Bulletin reported:

The principal gains in the Legislative session of 1927 were the two acts limiting assistance to voters and facilitating opening of ballot boxes. Under the first, precinct bosses can no longer with impunity force any and everyone over whom they can exert sufficient influence to take a ward heeler into the election booth to do his or her voting.

The law to permit opening of ballot boxes, while robbed somewhat of its virile powers, still may act as a deterrent in districts where there is a tendency to cheat by the threat contained in the bill permitting any three electors to demand a recount of ballots.

The local option power in the matter of installing voting machines was distinctly a move in the right direction.
GROWING as the organization was, it is not surprising that it was to suffer an attack of "growing pains." They came in April of 1927 in headlines which read:

**WOMEN VOTERS LEAGUE**  
**TORN BY OPEN REBELLION**

The substance of this "open rebellion" was a statement made by Miss Martha G. Thomas, first vice chairman of the League, demanding the resignation of Mrs. Miller as chairman. Miss Thomas, resigning from her own office at the same time, charged that League policies were being controlled by W. L. Mellon, Chairman of the Republican State Committee; that "the present, basic and fundamental educational program" of the League had been scrapped in favor of "getting results by substituting the boss system"; and that Mrs. Miller was planning to sell League House in Philadelphia and move the state headquarters to Pittsburgh.

Mrs. Miller (quoted in the same newspaper article) replied: "The charge that Mr. Mellon is dictating policy is ridiculous. It is exactly the same policy as when we organized in 1920. There has been no thought of moving the state headquarters to Pittsburgh. The matter of selling or retaining the League House is altogether a business consideration."

Two employees of the League also submitted resignations: Mrs. Harriet L. Hubbs, executive secretary; and Thomas J. Walker, editor of the League *Bulletin*.

In a special meeting, the state Board voted unanimously to decline to accept Miss Thomas' resignation "and in so doing reaffirm our belief in the principles for which the League has stood and, in the interest of the League and of good government, we declare differences between Board members be adjusted for the good of the organization."

Miss Thomas refused to reconsider her resignation and at the Board's next meeting it was accepted, as were those of Mrs. Hubbs and Thomas Walker.

A letter signed "Lucy K. Miller" and addressed to every League member in the state was published in the next issue of the *Bulletin*. It read:

My dear Fellow League Members:  
The action taken by the Pennsylvania League of Women Voters in which the entire Board present concurred (in-
year. When rumors began to be heard that the Bureau of Women and Children was to be abolished, League representatives joined with several other organizations in appealing to the Governor. Within a short time the order to do away with the Bureau was rescinded.

Presently there was news that an employee of the Bureau of Women and Children, highly respected and otherwise fully satisfactory, had been dismissed because she had not made the 3 per cent contribution of her salary to the organization’s campaign fund. Again the League sought interviews, this time with the state Director of the Department of Labor and Industry, who was in charge of the Bureau’s personnel. He decided that the employee should be retained.

MISS ELY was president of the Pennsylvania League from 1929 until 1933. Those elected to serve with her in 1930 were: Mrs. Herbert Goodrich of Philadelphia, treasurer; Miss Lucyle Austin of Chestnut Hill, secretary; and six vice presidents: Mrs. A.H. Bowman, Pittsburgh; Mrs. R. Pier Wright, Erie; Mrs. Conyers Read, Villanueva; Mrs. Thomas Ross, Doylestown; Mrs. John O. Miller, Pittsburgh; and Mrs. Edwin Yarnall, Swarthmore.

A revision of the Bylaws was proposed again at the 1930 convention—a measure providing for a year’s consideration of any suggested legislation before the League could endorse it or work for passage by the Legislature. There was sharp discussion about this until Miss Florence Harrison of the National League explained that the purpose was to allow local Leagues to study all parts of organization program long enough in advance to be familiar with them when the time to vote or take action came.

In 1931 the Pennsylvania League made a further change in Bylaws, deciding to hold Conventions every two years instead of annually. The date was changed from the fall to spring of each odd-numbered year.

These were the years of the stock market crash, bank failures, unemployment and apple-selling on city streets. The Pennsylvania League had not yet settled its own financial problems and now faced others which were serious. Membership dropped from 9,488 in 1927 to 9,116 in 1928 and 7,464 in 1929. It dropped again in 1930—cut almost in half, with 413 new members and only 2,949 renewals.

On April 23, 1932, the state Board of the Pennsylvania League unanimously approved the following resolution:

Whereas it has been conservatively estimated that at least one million workers are unemployed in the State of Pennsylvania and that, up to this date, the bulk of the relief for this enormous army of unemployed has been carried by funds secured from private sources and from local government agencies throughout the state, and whereas private relief is staggering under its present load and local public relief is collapsing, and whereas the basis for local taxation is limited to real estate already heavily burdened, while the state government has power to levy taxes on wealth other than real estate,

Therefore the state Board of the Pennsylvania League of Women Voters believes that it is necessary for the state government to provide funds in addition to the ten million allotted by the Talbot bill and urges the Governor of this State to call a special session of the Legislature as soon as possible for the purpose of furnishing relief for this emergency.”

Miss Ely was authorized to secure an appointment with Governor Pinchot to present this resolution in person. When the meeting took place, the Governor explained that action by Congress in Washington, granting federal aid to the states, would change the situation in Pennsylvania.

Like others throughout the nation, Pennsylvanians weathered that unforgettable bad summer and the succeeding months, with local, state and private sources straining to provide help for those in need.

The Philadelphia League found itself facing an unexpected problem in 1932. Ballots for the fall election carried this question, “Shall the voting machines be discontinued?” In the third largest city of the nation it looked as though—amid all the other threats to honest elections—one of the most prized safeguards might disappear.
League members went into energetic action. Booths were set up in the center of the city and for seven days preceding the election members were on hand to demonstrate how to use the machines and to answer questions. When the votes were counted, the answer to the question on the ballot was a strong "No."

But those who wanted to do away with voting machines were not through trying. In January, 1933, a bill was introduced by Senator Reed of Dauphin County to postpone purchase of voting machines in counties where voters had authorized them.

The League's observers in Harrisburg discovered that this bill, introduced on January 23, had been reported out of committee and passed on the first reading two days later—a most unusual procedure.

The measure provided that county commissioners who had not yet contracted for the purchase of voting machines should postpone purchase for 60 days. During this period, if any 25 voters signed a petition to further postpone purchase of machines, it would be done.

The state Board of the League acted immediately, issuing the following statement to the press: "The League of Women Voters fears that this bill which has been rushed through the Senate may pass in the House before people have a fair opportunity to know what is happening. This is a new scheme to sidestep the operation of a law which has popular support and approval. It is only one of many attempts to break down the morale of the voters."

Two weeks later the League spoke out in public again—this time as a watchdog guarding public welfare funds. The state Board, having become somewhat knowledgeable about political practices, felt there should be an audit of funds spent by the Poor Boards for relief. (Poor Boards were the forerunners of today's welfare agencies.)

In a letter to Governor Pinchot, signed by Miss Gertrude Ely, the League said: "There is an especial responsibility resting upon the citizens of the Commonwealth and our legislative bodies to see that money raised for relief purposes should be administered economically and subject to a system of careful scrutiny."

"A bill is before the House, asking that $20,000,000 be administered as were the first Talbot monies by the Poor Boards in the several counties of the state. We believe that an audit is vital to a proper decision on proposed legislation appropriating money for unemployment relief."

In May, 1933, the first spring Convention under the new biennial plan took place in Pittsburgh and Mrs. David Chandler Prince of Swarthmore was elected president. The program adopted for the next two years reflects the problems of the depression era. The League worked for minimum wage legislation, old age and unemployment insurance. They continued to urge adoption of centralized tax assessment and collection and new election laws, including permanent registration, appointment of court auditors and abolition of paid watchers.

There was still no clear-cut rule on what to do about League officers who were appointed or elected to public office. When Mrs. J. Passmore Cheyney was elected a member of Borough Council in Swarthmore, the state Board agreed informally that she should continue as a League official. But a year later, when Governor Pinchot appointed Mrs. Prince to be referee on the Workman's Compensation Board, she asked for and was given a leave of absence from her duties as president. Mrs. Conyers Read of Villanova became chairman of the Executive Committee during this emergency.

The use of public funds for welfare and the operation of the Poor Boards continued to be major concerns of the League. Members of the Philadelphia County League heard two sides of the question at a luncheon at the Germantown Cricket Club. Clinton Rogers Woodruff, Director of Welfare, pointed out that 42 wards were under the care of the Department while eight others had their own Poor Boards. Rep. Edwin C. Emhardt of Germantown defended the Poor Board system, while T. Henry Walnut attacked it. "The Poor Board is apparently just hanging in the air," he said. "Even the Governor can't touch it. There is no control or check and their own auditor audits the books." He pointedly asked why the collector of Poor Board taxes was permitted to keep 24 per cent of all delinquent collections.

By November the League was urging abolition of the Poor Boards. They added to this list abolition of the offices of magistrate, alderman and justices of the peace when they met for their fourteenth convention in 1935. In place of the magistrates and justices of the peace they recommended creation of courts of record, presided over by judges "learned in the law."

Mrs. Prince was reelected president of the League. Other
members in Pennsylvania rolled bandages for the Red Cross, raised victory gardens, worked in canteens and supported price control and rationing. After women began entering the armed services, some League members also put on uniforms.

The 1942–44 Program, nationally, called for “participation by the United States in the making and execution of loans for world-wide reconstruction and for post-war organization for peace.” In 1944 the League supported United States membership in a general international organization “for peaceful settlement of disputes with power to prevent or stop aggression.”

These were years of gasoline rationing, food rationing, unavailable hotel accommodations and posters everywhere demanding, “Is this trip necessary?” The Pennsylvania League held no Convention in 1945. By a statewide mail ballot Mrs. F. J. Bradfute of Mt. Lebanon was elected president. The election was announced at a meeting of the League Council in Harrisburg May 25. Others chosen as officers were: Mrs. Ralph A. Young, Moylan, first vice president; Mrs. Oliver J. Haller, Pittsburgh, second vice president; Mrs. Charles P. Gary, New Hope, third vice president; Mrs. George W. Stewart, Pittsburgh, secretary; and Mrs. Harry E. Kohn, Merion, treasurer.

That year—1945—was one of memorable events: President Roosevelt’s death and Vice President Truman taking over the office of President; the United Nations Conference in San Francisco; the atom bombing of Hiroshima; VE Day and VJ Day.

The League of Women Voters supported ratification of the United Nations Charter, and members of the Pennsylvania League helped to distribute literature to explain the Charter in terms which the average reader could understand. The League also supported the World Bank and International Fund.

The country—and the League—had traveled a considerable distance since 1920, when Pennsylvania women voters undertook to “study conditions at our own back doors.” The problems of becoming an informed citizen and voter had enormously increased.

The League nationally, considering its objective “to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government,” began to reorganize its program of study and action in 1944.

The purpose of these revisions was to make the role of the individual member more important in the organization: A new
Pennsylvania member today joins the League of Women Voters of the United States. She then works through her local League in the fields of government in her community.

The state League is composed of local Leagues and concerns itself with state government matters. All members work on state and national issues through their local Leagues.

The League program (governmental issues selected by its members for study, decision and action) was shortened in 1946 and simplified further in 1954. Program is three-fold—local, state and national. Local program frequently includes town or city planning, zoning, public schools and recreation. State Program in Pennsylvania has included Constitutional revision, fair apportionment of the Legislature, non-partisan selection of judges, education, welfare services and election laws.

The League's state Program is determined for two-year periods by delegates at the biennial state Conventions. Delegates to these Conventions informed as to what their local Leagues want, but un instructed. They vote as individuals. In the intervening years, state Councils are held.

The role of the state Leagues is to implement all League program, to organize new Leagues and to provide help and guidance to Leagues within the state. A state Board, elected by the local Leagues through their delegates at biennial state Conventions, directs these activities and conducts other state business, such as publishing state Program and legislative material.

All of these changes made in 1946 were explained by Mrs. Bradfute, president of the Pennsylvania League, at a special meeting of county and local chairmen held at the Hotel Sylvania in Philadelphia in October of that year. Revision of the Bylaws of the Pennsylvania League was necessary to conform with those which had been adopted by the national League at its convention in Kansas City in May. The changes were enacted at the Pennsylvania League's convention in the spring of 1947 when Mrs. Robert P. Wetherald of Narberth became president.

This was the first League convention to be held in Pennsylvania since 1941 because of war-time restrictions on travel. With Mrs. Wetherald as president, these officers were elected: Mrs. F. L. Bradfute, Mt. Lebanon, first vice president; Mrs. Oliver J. Harris, Pittsburgh, second vice president; Mrs. George Clapp, Newtown Square, third vice president; Mrs. George W. Mc-
county and local government and (2) establishment of an election system to protect voters from fraud or coercion. The shortened Program gave League members an opportunity to study, discuss and thoroughly inform themselves before deciding whether or not to take action.

Younger women were attracted to the League by another innovation—the unit system. A unit is a small discussion group that meets at times and places convenient to its members in their own neighborhood or while the children are in school or after working hours, when husbands can baby-sit.

In March, 1948, Miss Anna Lord Strauss and Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt came to Bryn Mawr, where each received the M. Carey Thomas Award for Distinguished Service from Bryn Mawr College. (Miss Thomas, a former president of the college, was one of Pennsylvania’s leading campaigners for women’s right to vote in the early 1900’s.) Miss Strauss was honored for “her many enterprises as national president of the League of Women Voters since 1944.”

Mrs. Wetherald was reelected president of the Pennsylvania League in 1949 at the Convention in Lancaster and, with her, these officers: Mrs. Oliver J. Haller, Pittsburgh, first vice president; Mrs. Jean F. Carroll, Philadelphia, second vice president; Mrs. G. H. Nicholas, Pittsburgh, third vice president; Mrs. C. Arthur Danielson, Erie, secretary; and Mrs. S. Jervis Brinton, Bryn Mawr, treasurer.

The 1949–51 Program again called for (1) Reorganization of state, county and local government to secure professional competence and (2) An improved program of public education.

Discussing bills before the Legislature which the Pennsylvania League supported or opposed, Mrs. Robert W. Williams, Legislative Chairman, said, “Our legislative program is an educational one in line with the purpose of the League to help citizens to take part in government. Therefore we exert ourselves to inform the community as well as our members.”

By the time the General Assembly adjourned its 1951 session The Pennsylvania Voter, official voice of the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania, could announce: “The League has won three important victories in the 1951 Legislature—the passage of the Public Health laws, the repeal of the ancient oleomargarine law prohibiting the sale of colored margarine in Pennsylvania, and the passage of resolutions pertaining to the city-county consolidation and debt stabilization in Philadelphia. It is gratifying to know that our extensive study of these problems, careful planning and hard work have helped to secure better government for the citizens of the Commonwealth.”

When the delegates met for their 1951 Convention at Pocono Manor in May they decided to center attention for the next two years on (1) A study of public school finances on state and local levels and (2) Continuing reorganization of the Department of Health. The officers for 1951–53 were: Mrs. Donald F. Bishop, Philadelphia, president; Mrs. Oliver J. Haller, Pittsburgh, first vice president; Mrs. Finley W. Smith, Easton, second vice president; Mrs. George W. Clapp, Newtown Square, third vice president; Mrs. Howard C. Peterson, Radnor Township, secretary; and Mrs. S. Jervis Brinton, Bryn Mawr, Treasurer.

Getting bills through the Legislature and on the statute books was only part of the work of accomplishing the League Program. For the Legislative chairman—and every other state chairman—there was the continuous watchdog duty of seeing what happened after the laws had been passed. Mrs. C. W. Wylam, Public Health Chairman, reported in December, 1952:

The bills to establish a merit system for Health Department personnel and home rule county health departments that were supported by the League during the last legislative session are now law. However, these Acts are enabling rather than mandatory; their implementation has been slow. While the process of educating the voters and the local legislators to the need for these changes goes on, we understand that vested jobholders can and do plan ways to weaken the new laws . . . League members will need to be very watchful for the introduction of any bills with the intent to jeopardise the program.

And a little later the Education Chairman, Mrs. Charles Carroll, was warning: “Leagues are urged to follow as closely as possible discussion in the coming session of the necessary tax legislation to cover the state’s obligations, past, present and future, to public education. It is to be hoped that our legislators will decide this important question early in the session.”

Meanwhile the need to revise the ancient state constitution, adopted in 1874, was being discussed with rising urgency by
some state officials and many thoughtful individuals concerned about the welfare of Pennsylvania. The 1953 General Assembly debated and finally passed measures calling for a referendum vote in the November election on the question, "Do you favor the preparation by a convention of a new constitution, subject to ratification by the people?"

When the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania gathered for their biennial Convention at the Bedford Springs Hotel at Bedford that spring they decided that League action for the next two years would concentrate on just one subject: "Evaluation of the need for specific changes in the Constitution of the Commonwealth and study of the method of Constitutional change."

The League would, of course, continue to support measures it had approved in earlier years: (1) reorganization of state, county and local government; (2) election reforms; and (3) provisions for an adequate program of public education.

Mrs. Bishop was reelected president. Other officers were: Mrs. Robert W. Williams, Bryn Mawr, first vice president; Miss Susan Baker, Lancaster, second vice president; Mrs. Norman F. Patton, Dallas, third vice president; Mrs. Hugo T. Wilder, Pittsburgh, secretary; Mrs. S. Jervis Brinton, Bryn Mawr, treasurer.

In addition to the referendum question which was to appear on the November ballot, there were four constitutional amendments to be voted on. The League urged a "Yes" vote for the referendum but neither supported or opposed the amendments.

Long before the election—in July—Voters Service committee all over the state had set to work strenuously to prepare material on the amendments. Sponsors of the measures and those opposed were asked their reasons. After all the opinions and background information had been assembled and evaluated, they were published in *The Pennsylvania Voter*. This nonpartisan explanation of the proposed amendments brought more favorable comment to *The Pennsylvania Voter* than anything every published before.

The statewide vote in November was 5 to 4 against calling a Constitutional Convention and defeat for all the amendments. It was a verdict which, for many League members, reinforced the wisdom of their undertaking to "evaluate the need for specific changes in the Constitution and the methods of Constitutional change."

When the state Council met in the spring of 1954 delegates spent more time discussing the need for revising the state consti-

...ution than any other subject. Miss Susan Baker, Constitution Chairman, wrote of this meeting: "The encouraging feature of the Council discussion was that nobody seemed dismayed at the bigness of the job nor at the length of time which appears to be needed. We are aware that we have taken on a long-term proposition but we believe that the League can make an important contribution to the cause of good government if we can provide a solid body of understandable information to our members and eventually our communities."

A year later in Pittsburgh Miss Baker was elected president of the Pennsylvania League. The Program adopted for 1955–57 was expressed in this statement: "The League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania, believing that revision of the Constitution of the Commonwealth is desirable, will (1) study to reach agreement on changes the League might support, giving first attention to financial provisions; (2) work for the appointment of a qualified, non-partisan commission as a basic step in achieving revision."

Officers elected, besides Miss Baker as president, were: Mrs. Norman F. Patton, Dallas, first vice president; Mrs. Donald F. Bishop, Philadelphia, second vice president; Mrs. Hugo T. Wilder, Pittsburgh, third vice president; Mrs. Bruce Cooper, Harrisburg, secretary; and Mrs. S. M. Viele, Swarthmore, treasurer.

New problems—and new answers—were being discovered by local Leagues in many parts of the state. The Berks County League in 1956 found a way to help with a community situation which won for them high commendation from many sources. Before the primary election a group of labor union men petitioned the county commissioners to make registration more convenient for workers by having special registration in department stores, office buildings and industries.

When their petition was well received, the League offered its members' services as special registrars, stressing that they did not want to take the place of regular, paid registrars, appointed from lists submitted by each political party. Thirty-two women attended a class of instruction given by the chief registrar, after which they gave their services on 21 days at 23 industries, adding 1,532 enrollments. Berks County registration reached an all-time high.

The League of State College helped its Borough Council to establish a library board, collected 11,000 books, helped secure
a library building (donated as a memorial) and then supported a referendum for a library tax on the ballot. The vote was a 2-to-1 victory and, although voters are notably casual on local referendums, on the library question 92 per cent of all the voters responded.

In Radnor Township the League arranged a series of neighborhood meetings to help new residents learn how the township is governed. Beginning in an area of new homes, husbands and wives were invited to a local home for an evening's get-together with refreshments. The township commissioner elected from that ward, the engineer and manager came, and each spoke briefly, then answered questions—of which there were many. The League was pleased with the good attendance, especially by men.

In Philadelphia a Voters Handbook, written in Spanish, was produced by the League with the cooperation of St. Joseph's College under a grant from the Sears-Roebuck Foundation. The non-partisan guide was addressed to the large Spanish-speaking population of Philadelphia.

These illustrations are but a sprinkling to indicate the many ways in which League members, working on Voters Service, have given real meaning to those words. The illustrations could be multiplied vastly.

Governor Leader announced in August, 1956, the appointment of Miss Susan Baker as a member of the Civil Service Commission, a 3-member Commission. In the announcement the Governor said, "Miss Baker and the League of Women Voters have had a long interest in state government. . . . As a member of the Civil Service Commission she will, I am confident, display the same organizational and leadership ability that she has as president of the Pennsylvania League of Women Voters."

The new officers for 1957-59 were: Mrs. Norman F. Patton, Dallas, president; Mrs. John D. Kenderdine, Lancaster, first vice president; Mrs. Robert L. McGeehan, Hazleton, second vice president; Mrs. C. Weir Wylam, Springfield, third vice president; Mrs. William A. Reisstein, Lower Merion, secretary; and Mrs. S. M. Viele, Swarthmore, treasurer.

They were elected at the Convention in Wernersville, where revision of the constitution was again the subject foremost in the discussion among delegates. This Program for the next two years was adopted: "(1) The League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania, believing that a thorough revision of the Constitution of the Commonwealth is desirable, will continue to seek improvement in its legislative provisions and study to reach agreement on other desirable changes, giving first attention to the judiciary provisions. (2) The League will study and evaluate, with a view to action, proposals for extension of absentee ballot privilege to qualified voters."

The commission which two years earlier the League had proposed, for the purpose of studying the state constitution and recommending changes, came into being in 1957. The General Assembly passed a bill providing for the creation of such a commission. In October, 1957, The Pennsylvania Voter reported, "Mrs. Robert L. McGeehan, our own Constitution Chairman, is a member of the State Commission for Constitutional Revision."

The officers and directors elected at 1959 Convention at Williamsport. Seated, left to right: Mrs. David W. Clark, Mrs. John D. Kenderdine, Mrs. Norman F. Patton, Mrs. G. L. MacLane, Mrs. G. M. Dusinberre, and Mrs. Leon Saul; standing: Mrs. Mjøsray H. Shusterman, Mrs. Lawrence Haner, Mrs. William E. Cadbury, Jr., Mrs. Arthur Mirsky, and Mrs. Paul Taylor.
This appointment is a tribute to her imaginative leadership and the sound work the League has done under her capable direction. We may well be proud."

When the Commission completed its work and submitted its report in March, 1959, it "found changes advisable" and recommended that they should be made by amendment.

Two months later at the League's Convention in Williamsport revision of the constitution topped the program adopted for the next two years. Mrs. Patton continued as president for 1959–61. Elected also were: Mrs. John D. Kenderdine, Lancaster, first vice president; Mrs. G. L. MacLane, Pittsburgh, second vice president; Mrs. G. M. Dusinberre, State College, third vice president; Mrs. David W. Clark, Rosemont, secretary; and Mrs. Leon Saul, Media, treasurer.

Having decided to study proposals for an absentee voters' law in 1957, reports of League consensus two years later showed overwhelming approval. In January, 1960, Governor Lawrence signed a bill permitting absentee voting for qualified voters. The Pennsylvania Voter noted that "During the 1959 session of the Legislature, the League supported several bills on absentee voting. All through the long session a close watch was kept and the legislators were frequently advised regarding the feelings of members of the League. Final victory was achieved when House Bill 1977 was signed by Governor Lawrence."

May, 1961, brought another state convention and election—at St. David's this time. And again the need to revise the Commonwealth's constitution seemed most important to its delegates. Study of the fiscal role of state government in the field of education was the second subject on the adopted program.

The newly elected officers were: Mrs. G. L. MacLane, Pittsburgh, president; Mrs. Lawrence Haner, West Chester, first vice president; Mrs. M. W. Isenberg, State College, second vice president; Mrs. John Kenderdine, Lancaster, third vice president; Mrs. Herman Lightman, Berks County, secretary; and Mrs. Robert Farlow, New Hope, treasurer.

An event hailed as "a notable victory" came in September, 1961, with the signing of the Delaware River Compact, establishing a Basin Commission. It had been endorsed by the Legislatures of Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey and New York. Approval was reached in the United States Congress, and President Kennedy signed the bill on September 29. The Compact had the strong support of the Leagues of the four states.

"Hope in the League of Women Voters has as many lives as a cat," said The Pennsylvania Voter in reviewing the long-held conviction among League members that Pennsylvania must have a new constitution. So in May, 1963, delegates voted for "complete revision of the Constitution of the Commonwealth" when they adopted their 1963-65 program at the convention in York.

As new officers they chose: Mrs. Lawrence Haner, West Chester, president; Mrs. John Svenson, Whitemarsh, first vice president; Mrs. George Lerner, Butler, second vice president;
Mrs. Robert Slobod, State College, third vice president; Mrs. Fred N. Woodworth, Meadowbrook, secretary; and Mrs. Robert Farlow, New Hope, treasurer.

That was in May. By September, League members were doing their best to inform voters all over the state that ballots in the November election would carry the question, "Do you favor a Constitutional Convention to prepare a new constitution, subject to ratification by a vote of the people?" The League's answer was a tumultuous "Yes."

"They laughed when I sat down at the piano" might well have been the theme song of the League's 1953 state Convention, when the delegates blithely decided to tackle the big topic of constitution study," wrote Miss Susan Baker in *The Pennsylvania Voter*. She was optimistic, continuing, "By contrast, in 1963 our League of Women Voters is larger in membership. We are much more knowledgeable about constitutional issues and so are our communities. We have allies. There is now a bipartisan, statewide organization of groups and individuals pushing for a Constitutional Convention."

The vote in the election that fall was a sharp and bitter disappointment—1,148,060 Noyes to 1,106,388 Yeses. But *The Pennsylvania Voter* had words of consolation, "It was a great, a noble fight against tremendous odds. The League did a magnificent job, worked as never before, learned by action about real political effectiveness. We are now the recognized leaders in the drive for constitutional revision which, let's face it, is a particularly difficult, long-term goal."

The following year, in April, 1964, the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania was host to members from all fifty states when the national League held its Convention at the Pittsburgh Hilton in Pittsburgh. Fifteen hundred League members attended and President Lyndon Johnson came to address them. The President on this occasion designated September 15-19 as National Women Voters' Week.

When Governor Scranton appointed another commission to review all proposed amendments as well as the findings of the Constitutional Commission appointed in 1957, Mrs. Haner was invited to serve as a member. The 1964 Commission promulgated 12 resolutions as the basis for constitutional action in the Legislature. The League, although favoring a constitutional convention, supported the recommendation of the 1964 Governor's Commission.

"The game of constitutional revision," a League member mused, "is not for the short-winded."

At Easton, where the 1965 convention assembled, Mrs. Haner was reelected president. Other members of the 1965–67 State Board were Mrs. Louis Soret, Harrisburg, first vice president; Mrs. Marvin Welsch, Narberth, second vice president; Mrs. E. R. Bellows, Glenshaw, third vice president; Mrs. Voris V. Latshaw, Bethlehem, secretary; and Mrs. John Yurchenko, Radnor, treasurer.

The Program adopted for the next two years was Constitutional Revision, Election Laws, Education, and Public Health.
managed to do in the 20th century—overhaul its basic charter in meaningful and fundamental ways.

Forty-eight years of hard work by League members had, at last and indeed, paid off.

Could there have been a faint echo, somewhere, of those delegates in 1920, in their big hats and floor-sweeping skirts, speaking at the first League Convention in Philadelphia, when they decided that constitutional revision should have first place on their legislative program? Or a whisper of the voice of the Pennsylvania League's first president saying after this first defeat: "The Constitutional Convention is like suffrage. Something to be worked for until it is accomplished."

At any rate, the League knew well that there was more work to be done because nearly every section of the new constitutional articles require legislative implementation. League activity in constitutional revision, therefore, has continued.

There is always more work to be done when you are trying "to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government."

Members of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives passed a resolution on March 18, 1969, congratulating the League of Women Voters of the state on their fiftieth anniversary.

Mrs. Robert Farlow, president of the League, thanked the legislators for their birthday good wishes with these words:

Mr. Speaker, members of the House of Representatives . . . Reaching the age of 50 is a milestone, a significant point in the development not only of an individual but also of an organization. It is a time for looking ahead and planning for the future, and a time for looking back and reaffirming one's guiding principles.

League members believe that the strength of democracy lies in the participation of the individual in his government and in the political party of his choice.

The League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania has an impressive record of legislative activities during the past fifty years . . . Some of our objectives have been accomplished. Some we are still working towards. In light of this long history of involvement, I am sure that you will understand and excuse us if at times we become impatient with the rather slow process of legislative action.

When you get that telephone call over the week-end, when you receive that telegram late at night or early in the morning, when you are pestered, pursued and beleaguered by your constituents who are members of the League of Women Voters, please remember that we are a pressure group but not in self-interest. We are lobbyists but not for pay. Our sole interest is the achievement of good government, responsive to the needs of all citizens.

We have a deep interest and desire to work with the Legislature. We are anxious to share with you information on the subjects we have studied. We do want to listen to Governor Raymond P. Shafer signs the proclamation honoring the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania on its 50th Anniversary. Seated with the Governor on the left, Mrs. Lawrence Haner, past president, on the right, Mrs. Robert Farlow, president. Standing, left to right: Mrs. Walter Gropp, Mrs. Walter Cochran, and Mrs. Gustave Ehrenberg, state Board members. March, 1969.
the political viewpoint and thank you for the interviews you so graciously grant our members. We do want to keep building a better rapport so that the Legislature and the League of Women Voters can work together for a better Pennsylvania.

Yes, there is always more work to be done—

Assembled for their 28th Convention at the Warwick Hotel in Philadelphia in April, 1969, the League voted to make its chief enterprise for the coming two years a study of the tax structure of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The League will also continue to support and study revision of the Constitution of Pennsylvania and support measures which protect, extend and increase the use of the franchise.

Officers elected to serve until 1971 were: Mrs. Robert Farlow, New Hope, president; Mrs. Burton S. Benovitz, Wilkes-Barre, first vice president; Mrs. Richard D. Solo, Philadelphia, second vice president; Mrs. John Yurchenco, Radnor Township, third vice president; Mrs. Richard Winston, Havertford Township, secretary; and Mrs. Justin Neuhoff, Marple-Newtown, treasurer.

THIS is the record, briefly told, of the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania since its first public appearance in Independence Square in Philadelphia in September, 1920.

The toddler of the 20's has grown through school days, and adolescence, to become a mature adult. She is a housewife who believes the welfare of her family is bound closely with her community, state and federal government. She tries to help her neighbors.

She is fifty years old, though she really doesn't look it. She is fifty—and proud of it.