LOBBYING AND THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

Interview

with

LAVINIA ENGLE

by

Margaret Cutler

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MRS. CUTLER: Today is February 12, 1971, and I am Margaret Cutler visiting Miss Lavinia Engle at her home at 500 Pershing Drive in Silver Spring.

Miss Engle, you were just telling me such a charming story about Susan B. Anthony.

MISS ENGLE: Susan B. Anthony was, as I think most of you know, the organizer and for many years the president of the National American Woman's Suffrage Association.

This organized group of women, who were the leaders in--I won't say the battle, but the campaign--for the right to vote for women, was organized by Miss Anthony rather interestingly.

She and a group of women who had been active in the anti-slavery movement attended a conference of those who were working for the abolition of slavery and found to their surprise that they were not to sit on the floor of the convention hall but in the gallery; and they did not have a vote.

Well, they were not pleased, as you might imagine; and after the meeting, they got together--several of them: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Elizabeth Blackwell and Miss Anthony, who was more or less the leader of the group--and called the convention or conference at Seneca Falls at which this organization was born.

And for many years, Miss Anthony led the organized activity of setting up organizations for woman's suffrage in the various states in the United States, launching campaigns to have the states enfranchise their women for state voting. And they held an annual convention. And one year when I was about seven or eight years old, their annual convention was in Baltimore. And my mother, who was active in the suffrage movement, also a Lavinia, said, "I'm going to take you to the convention in Baltimore. Miss Anthony is growing old, and I want you to see her and remember her."

So I tagged along and went to the meeting, and mother took me up to the chair in which she was sitting and said to her, "Aunt Susan," as they all called her, "this is my daughter, Lavinia."

And she said, "Oh, another Lavinia!" and reached out and drew me over to her and said, "And you'll be another Lavinia who campaigned for woman's suffrage." And I said, "Oh, yes, Aunt Susan, I will." And she patted me on the head and laughed, and my mother said, "Well, I'll raise her up to the faith, Aunt Susan."

Aunt Susan was a lovely looking person at that time, and it was just a few years before she died. She was a tall, slender woman with then snow-white hair. She dressed usually in gray. She was a Quaker, as many of those suffrage leaders were, but she wore a bright red knitted silk scarf around her shoulders; and this was sort of an insignia. She always wore that if the weather was at all chilly, and it was a picturesque and lovely picture of an older woman who had really led a life of dedication to the one movement.

Now, one of our stories that I think is not always as well known as it should be was that of the first woman in what came to be the United States who asked for the right of vote, and she was a Maryland woman.

This was Margaret Brent, daughter of a gentleman of considerable wealth in the beginning in England, who was a Catholic. And during the period when our Maryland colony was granted by King Charles to Lord Baltimore, there was a good deal of persecution of the Catholics in England. They were heavily taxed--taxed to the point they were beggared--and the Brent family was a fairly large family with considerable wealth. And the father of Margaret decided that his son Giles should come to the new colony, and Margaret decided that she also would come. And she, bringing her younger sister Mary, and Giles Brent came to Maryland among the first colonists. She had to sign the papers "Margaret Brent, Gentleman Adventurer," as a woman coming as one of the adventurers to found the colony was a bit unusual in any of the colonies.

She had a grant directly to herself which was called the "sister's freehold," and she and her sister Mary established their home there. The fact that it was the sister's freehold and not the sister's manor was rather indicative, because a

manor meant that the lord of the manor had the power of life and death over the people who were living on and a part of his estate.

A freehold meant that the people who lived on the estate had the right of direct resource to the courts of the colony, and it was a step for freedom for your working class that was very marked and was a very pronounced part of the Maryland colony program.

Well, Margaret Brent became a very active person in the affairs of the colony. She was quite well educated, very well read, and, as I say, quite active. She and her workmen developed a very fine estate that was quite well-to-do; raised tobacco, which was shipped to England and sold, and had a place as a person that was unusual as to leadership, I think, in the colony or any of the colonies at that time.

MRS. CUTLER: Where was this?

MISS ENGLE: This was in St. Mary's City.

MRS. CUTLER: In St. Mary's City?

MISS ENGLE: Yes. St. Mary's City, which was the first capital and the first town of any sort, and the freehold is in St. Mary's County that it is still identified and you know where it is, although the houses are no longer there.

So when Leonard Calvert, who was the brother of Lord Baltimore and was the first governor of Maryland, after he had been here a few years (he was an older man and he was ill and died.)

And when he was on his deathbed, he called Mistress Brent and the members of the colony's Council, the Governor's Council, and he named Margaret Brent as the executor of his estate. "Take all, pay all," was his only instruction to her.

As the brother of the head of the colony and a very wealthy man in his own right, Leonard Calvert owned a great deal of property. Some of it was rented out. Some of it was farmed for him, and Mistress Brent had rather a good sized job in settling

all of the claims against the estate and also in managing to see that the property that was being operated for him was operated on a paying basis, et cetera, et cetera.

So, in the connection with this, the question came up of suits against the estate; and the Council--the Maryland Governor's Council--recognized this and discussed the matter and said that since Mistress Brent was having to go into the courts of the colony to represent the former Governor, she should be recognized as having the right to appear in the courts; and she was given the title "attorney-at-law."

So, she was our first woman lawyer, and this was back in 16-- I guess this happened in the early 1650's, and I'm a little interested to find that very few women lawyers realize how very early their right to appear in courts was recognized, at least in this one colony.

She came through a number of other very interesting experiences. When the men who had been recruited by Leonard Calvert down in Virginia to serve as a sort of an army for the colony when the pirate Engle (no relation, I assure you, to our family) attacked the colony and at one time burned St. Mary's City.

So they brought up quite a good sized little army--100 about, I think--who were the ones who repulsed the pirates and drove them out.

At that time, Leonard Calvert died and these men were left, having successfully finished their campaign against the pirates, but they were not paid and they were without money. So they appealed to the Governor of the colony, who said he did not have any monies from which to pay them. And there was a considerable disturbance, and they finally settled down in a camp outside of St. Mary's and said, Very well, they'd burn the city themselves then.

Well, the Governor asked Mistress Brent to go out and talk with them and see what she could work out. So she went out, and they knew who she was and received her and told her their story--that they wanted to be paid, and they were hungry and did not have money for food.

She heard their story and said, "What you're saying is just and right." She said, "I will have the men on my estate bring you food. There will be wagonloads of food brought to you immediately. I will also send you hogsheads of tobacco which you may sell for money, and I will undertake to get the money to pay what Governor Calvert promised you."

To do that, she had to sell one of his estates--a house--and some of the people in the colony, who apparently didn't like Mistress Brent, wrote to Lord Baltimore that Mistress Brent was selling his brother's property.

Well, Lord Baltimore wrote a very angry letter to the then acting Governor and said, "This must be stopped." And there is on file in our Hall of Records a copy of the reply that was sent by the Council--the Governor's Council--to Lord Baltimore saying, "Your Lordship has been greatly misinformed. Mistress Brent has handled the affairs of your brother with great skill and great interest, and she has saved the colony from being attacked and probably burned; and we owe her great gratitude for her able administration."

So she really was what you might consider an independent woman who throught things through. And the next part of the story was, she appeared before the Council and asked for a seat on the Council, which would give her the right to vote.

In fact, she said, as the representative of the Baltimore estates, she should have one vote. As the largest taxpayer in the colony, she should have one for herself. So, she wanted two votes.

Well, the story is -- and in doing my research, I found this just referred to-- but the story is that the Council turned her down, not because they did not recognize that she had done a valuable job and was an able woman -- they said that in their refusal -- but because they feared this would set a bad example to "ye wives of ye colony."

MRS. CUTLER: That's a story we've heard before.

MISS ENGLE: Now, when suffrage was granted to women, we still did not have a great many of our civil rights, as you know; and one of the things that we did not have was entrance for women to the State University.

This was true in Maryland and a good many other states, and we had been actively campaigning for that before the suffrage was granted.

When we finally got the ratification and organized the League of Women Voters as the child of the National American Woman's Suffrage Association, Mrs. Charles Ellicott was our first president; and we pushed for the full admission to the University.

One or otwo of the men who were then in control of matters on the Board of the University and its administrators had an idea they would set up a separate women's college like the Greensboro College for Women in North Carolina.

But we wanted women admitted to all of the University professional schools as they were, and we wanted them to enter as individuals and not just as women.

So, then came the question of what and how they were going to handle this, and the women who came who did not live in the immediate neighborhood had to find a place to live; and there were very few houses in College Park where they could be housed and act as — be boarders.

So they took the old "Y" hut which had been used during World War I for a YMCA hut for recreation for the men who were in training on the campus. It was a barracks-like building, not too large, and they gutted it and then put in partitions separating what were really bunk beds for the girls and put a shower and toilet in one end; and that was the only dormitory for women on the campus.

This naturally cameto our attention; and when we had tried several times to get the Board of Regents to move and to include a dormitory in the budget and found they had so many other things because the University as a university was comparatively new then—it had been just the Agricultural College.

So, before they had a meeting of the Board of Regents with the Governor, we went down to Annapolis and said to Governor Ritchie, "Governor, when you attend the Board of Regents meeting, will you do one thing for us?"

"Why," he said, "certainly. What is it?" And we said, "Will you go and look at the so-called women's dormitory where the girls have the only place for women that is provided at the University?"

"Well," he said, "that's very little. Of course, I'll do it." So they were down at the meeting and, when they adjourned for lunch, the then-acting manager, Curly Byrd, said, well, they would go down to look at where a new building that they wanted in their next budget would be built and he'd like to show them the general plan for the University development down there.

And the Governor said, "I want to see the women's dormitory." And he said, "Oh, Governor, that's just an old building being temporarily used. You don't want to see that because that isn't part of our permanent plan, of course."

Well, the Governor went outside and said to one of the men on the Board of Regents, "Well, I'd promised I'd see that building, and I'm going down and take a look at it."

So the two of them went down. There was nobody there but the maid, who was cleaning up, and so the Governor and the other man from the Board of Regents went through and looked it over; and it was pretty bad. When they came out, he shook his head and said, "This will never do." Well, about that time, they had missed him from the party that was going down to look at the new building site. And when they cameback and went to the meeting that afternoon, the Governor said, "Gentlemen, I have looked at the women's dormitory, and I think all of you should go and look at it. This is not a decent place to house the young ladies of the State. And if your budget does not include a dormitory for women, I will put it in myself." And that's how we got our first women's dormitory.

So, when the plans were made and it was put in (it was approved, of course), they asked Mrs. Ellicott to lay the cornerstone and to select a name for the building.

Well, we not only did that, but several years before the suffrage amendment was ratified at one of the great international fairs that were quite popular then (I forget whether it was the one in Chicago or San Francisco), but the National Suffrage Association had paintings made of distinguished women in American history--Abigail Adams, Ann Hutchison and Margaret Brent--and the picture of Margaret is of her appearance before the Council asking for the vote.

These were painted by rather distinguished artists in New York and were sent out as our exhibit at the Fair. So, we asked the National Suffrage Association to give us or sell us the painting of Margaret Brent, which they did.

And we named the building Margaret Brent Hall, and this picture of Mistress Brent was in the main hall--the downstairs hall.

Well, when I went down to the session not long ago, I discovered that the new names for buildings had replaced all of the names of individuals and they were named for counties. And Margaret Brent Hall is now just St. Mary's Hall. So anyway, we have that under consideration as to how we'll get some recognition of her place in Maryland history.

But that was the first woman to ask for the vote in what came to be the United States, and I suspect the first one in English history, although there may have been [others] in earlier days.

But, anyway, this history of the movement of woman's suffrage is really a part of the movement of our gradual expansion of civil rights and the right of suffrage, the right of self-government and participation in government that began when the idea of Divine Right of kings and of property as more important than people, and all voting being associated with ownership of property.

You know the story of Daniel Webster. They had the battle over universal suffrage and, when he pointed out that a certain man in the community had not been able to vote because he had no property, and then he bought a donkey and the donkey cost enough so that his property enabled him to vote.

And the question that Webster raised was, "Who really voted, the man or the donkey?" But women even with property did not have civil rights or the right of participation in government unless they were the heirs of great estates and took the title of the estate, which was possible in English law.

They even, as you know, had queens who, by right of inheritance, became the head of government; so that you have to see it as a part of a broad evolution.

You have to recognize that, at the time of the anti-slavery movement, it was quite logical that the extension of suffrage to women should be considered. And when the amendments that freed the slaves and enfranchised them were under consideration, the women of the women's suffrage movement, Susan B. Anthony and the other ladies of that period, tried to get Congress to make the amendment read: "shall not be denied on account of race, religion or sex," but they were not successful in doing so.

And the leaders of the slavery movement said to them, "Your time will come, but this is the Negro's hour." But it was well over 50 years--it was nearer 70--before we finally were able to get the universal suffrage for all women in the United States.

There were at that time, I think it was 17 states--it was 15 or 17--that had given women the right to vote in the state as far as they could go, you see, on state matters.

The decision to concentrate on the states was made by the National Suffrage Association when they realized the political power that they would have in Congress when the Congressmen realized that women in their own state had the vote and could use it. So that the last end of the campaign for woman's suffrage was a drive to

get as many states in as possible, and then came the time when it was decided — and this was back in 1916 — that at the convention it was decided that it would be wise to concentrate and push for the Federal amendment.

And I might tell you one story there that I think is a bit of history that didn't exactly get written into even our history of the suffrage movement which was, as you know, kept up from the Seneca Convention. But at the 1916 convention, which was held in Atlantic City, and as field secretary of the organization, I was there working with the staff and the Board, getting preparations made. And at this time, we were in — the European war was in full swing, and it was the first time that I had ever participated in a meeting in which the Secret Service searched the building before the President came and the first time the President of the United States addressed one of our suffrage meetings, and this was Woodrow Wilson. It was well known that he had made the statement that he thought women should vote, and we were delighted that he was the speaker at this meeting.

He made a marvelous speech. He talked of the evolution of the right to vote. He talked of the evolution of the woman's movement within that right. And then he spoke of the fact that this country faced a decision quite soon because of what was happening in Europe. It was a decision that we had to face with great reluctance and with prayer and understanding of what it meant, because it was the decision as to whether we participated and entered into the war or whether we stood to one side.

And certainly, with all the progress that had been made in the woman's movement, certainly in face of what we faced at this time, said he, "Certainly now you can afford a little time to wait," and with that, he sat down. The whole audience of women—and it was in a theater that was packed—was silent for a minute, and Dr. Shaw came to the front of the platform. You know, she was a little bit of a woman, just over five feet tall, and snow white hair and a lovely beautiful voice. She was truly a great orator. And she turned to him and said—and I'm paraphrasing this—

"Mr. President," she said, "you have moved us deeply. This is the first time that the President of the United States has met with the women who are campaigning and fighting for the right to participate in government. Mr. President, we have heard your words. We have listened to what you have said. We have heard you say that, certainly at this period, we can afford a little time to wait." And she stopped a minute. She said, "If that time comes when you call the men of this country to arms to enter into a war, those men who come to your call are men for whom each man represents the months that a woman has walked face to face with an empty grave..." (at that time, our maternal and infant death rate was high). She said, "It means that that woman has faced death to bring through the gates of life into this world a son or a daughter. And if by chance that child is born and lives, for the next years of her life, she first has nurtured him in her arms. She has fed him from her body. She has taught him to walk. She has taught him, then, how to become a grown person step by step. And this represents, when you call him to arms, probably 20 years of a woman's life." She said, "Mr. President, when you face that decision, you face a decision in which the women of this country have a deep and significant part and a deep and significant call to make a sacrifice for their country. And Mr. President, the time to enfranchise the women is now!" And at that, she turned and he rose and came to the front of the platform and took her hand in his and led her back to her seat.

And that whole audience of women then rose and applauded, and he came to the front and bowed. And I've always thought it was the time that he reached the decision that he carried out of the next session of Congress. He sent a message recommending the submission of the Federal amendment. But it was a dramatic moment. I have never forgotten it.

Eleanor Rowell and I were sitting on the steps going down to the...in the gallery when that happened, and we clutched each other. She was one of the staff who were out organizing in the field.

It was truly a turning period because he did recommend the amendment. It was submitted and, as you know, in 1920 it was ratified; and that was the end of a long, long campaign.

MRS. CUTLER: ...But the beginning of some new ones.

MISS ENGLE: A beginning of — and I think the decision made by the National American Woman's Suffrage Association seven years before the ratification, when they talked of what should be done when the suffrage amendment was ratified, and at the convention — I think it was the one in '13 or '14—'14 probably — it was decided to appoint a committee who would discuss and bring to the next convention recommendations as to what should be done to help the women of the country use that ballot effectively and wisely.

And it was the recommendation of that committee that we organize, when suffrage was ratified, a League of Women Voters. And from then on, the Committee on the League of Women Voters was carried on the letterhead of the National Suffrage Association.

And when the ratification was finally accomplished and the last convention of the National Suffrage Association met in Chicago, it met that first day or two to wind up the business of an organization that, for more than 50 years, had been campaigning all over the United States, to settle all of its accounts, to give the report from their finance officers, and finally to present to the Suffrage Association the report of the Committee that recommended the organization of the League of Women Voters and the transfer to the League of as many of the financial assets and other assets of the Suffrage Association as were not needed for winding up its affairs.

Then, they adjourned with a gala banquet that night. This was held at the Congress Hotel in Chicago in the Gold Room, and at the end of the banquet hall, there was a huge oval gilt frame.

And the program was--a woman from each state that had ratified a state amendment and enfranchised women before the Federal amendment appeared in the frame and told the story of their entrance into full suffrage rights.

And then, at the conclusion, Dr. Shaw and Mrs. Catt made a brief farewell to the organization and closed the books.

The next morning, they reconvened to organize the League of Women Voters, and that was how the League got started.

And the thing that interests me is the program for the League that was presented at that second day by the Committee was that it should be an organization to study and to get facts and to advise the women of what had been studied and the recommendations and to see that the suffrage was used with wisdom and understanding by women who really cared that their vote should be effective.

And at the 50th Anniversary, having sat through those days of that meeting, I was tremendously moved by the fact that, really, the recommendations of that group of women had been carried out in the National League to an extent that is truly amazing.

MRS. CUTLER: They have indeed. I noticed that Kate Millet in her book mentions the League and its role, and she mentions the fact that the League, for the first years of its existence, worked to get protection for women in industry and to improve the civil status of women.

But her feeling was that the League then, rather -- what shall I say? -- left this role. It stuck with the facts and didn't adopt a move activist role for the status of women, and I'd be interested in your comments.

MISS ENGLE: Well, I think, when you speak of the status of women, you're talking of something that runs through several channels.

First, of all, there is the legal status--your situation in the eyes of the law--and the things for which you need legislative action.

Then you have the - shall we say - the sociological and psychological as well as the social status of women, and these are things that come in part by law but

much more through the evolution of the social thinking of the group, the community, the total group.

And as the League came through those first few years in which our major emphasis was on getting women thoroughly enfranchised, that meant seeing that city charters where there was any discrimination in practice were amended, seeing that there were no pitfalls in participation in all of the selection of officials and also in the legislative halls, et cetera, et cetera,

In so doing, you moved into the fact that women would have a little problem at first in getting themselves elected. And Jeanette Rankin, of course, had left her position as field secretery of the National Suffrage Association when Montana enfranchised the women, and she ran for Congress. And it was her position that I filled when I went to them as field secretary—first, organizer and then as field secretary.

It was then that we realized that your statute law had to be followed by court decision, and one of the things that had to be done in many cases, particularly when you got into the question of a woman's financial status as an individual,(you must remember that at the time that suffrage was granted, even in the 1920's, the statutes relating to the law of inheritance and descent, the law as to the status of a married woman in relation to her own earnings in more than half the states—I couldn't be sure of that exact number—) a husband could collect his wife's earnings. He could sue if she were injured for the loss of her services. She could not sue for her own loss. She had no legal rights over her children. When she married, her property became really her husband's property. He had so much control over it.

Now, these laws were not just statutes that wrote the English common law into statute. They were also the French areas of the country, the Spanish areas — not so much the German. But the French, the English, the Spanish and some of the Scandinavian out in Wisconsin and the area out there, and that what you had to do was

to go back and, in the states, you had to amend statute laws. I believe I have told you the tale that one of the laws we had to amend in Maryland was the law—the statute that said that proven unchastity of a wife before marriage was grounds for divorce.

MRS. CUTLER: Yes.

MISS ENGLE: And this type of law...The fact...well, there were some states that still had the remnants as to a child's statute. The old English common law held that a man or a woman could not be held for murder of an illegitimate child because an illegitimate child was personna non est. He had no legal existence. Now, this type of thing seems so absurd to us now after 50 years; but this was the type of thing that you had to go into law by law, step by step throughout the entire country.

MRS. CUTLER: Well, in the State of Maryland, I know you had quite a strong opposition to woman's suffrage. Could you identify any special interests that you would say were particularly opposed? I remember reading that liquor interests in some states in the Midwest opposed women getting the vote, for obvious reasons.

MISS ENGLE: Well, the organized liquor interests were pretty definitely opposed to woman's suffrage and campaigned against it.

One of the pictures I have in my scrapbook, I think, is when I was campaigning down...I think it was...in Texas; and there was quite an active liquor lobby there. And we had a booth at the State Fair, and I am pictured with Minnie Fisher Cunningham holding up a sign because we were just in the labor movement's early days; and our sign said, "There is no union-made liquor." That was it — "There is no union-made liquor."

And it was interesting. You had opposition from some of the men's unions. Women were not in organized labor to any extent in the early days. You had an attitude that women were not really intelligent enough to vote. And I'll never forget—my mother had a very strict rule that anyone who worked for us—and that is,

on the place (we had some acreage), or in the house — must be taught to read and write and simple arithmetic, if they did not already have it. She had been a teacher.

Well, you can imagine how you felt when someone you had taught to read and write stood up and said to you, "Oh, but women don't know enough to vote." But that happened pretty often.

MRS. CUTLER: But it went beyond male chauvinism, though. There was really economic...

MISS ENGLE: It was economic.

MRS. CUTLER: ...as well.

MISS ENGLE: Yes. It was...And recognition of woman's capacity was slow in coming because at that time, you still had many, many areas in which women professionally...you still today have an awfully hard time for a girl to get into a medical school, and that is economic also.

Now, one of the things the Suffrage Association did during World War I at the meeting—and this was the '16 meeting, I think, or the '17 — there was much discussion, what could the organization do to show that we were supporting the country.

And it was decided we would organize a medical unit to go overseas because, at that time, we were very unprepared for war and there were not in the Army enough field units to service the Army overseas or in this country.

So we organized a complete all-woman medical unit that went overseas. The hardest one to get was a woman plumber; but we had doctors, nurses, laboratory technicians and everything.

Well, they also were recruiting women to go over for the canteen service that the YMCA carried out, and they approached me, and Dr. Shaw thought maybe I ought to go; so I did. Well, I got over, as a matter of fact, just about the time the Armistice was — I think we were on the way — but I was sent out to...(inaudible)

And the women's hospital was at Nancy, quite near. So we were up and saw the girls and knew them, and they were down at the camp and that sort of thing. And the men always wanted to go to Nancy, if they had an old wound that might have reopened or if they had been hurt or anything, but particularly if there was anything that they could get up to Nancy, that's where they wanted to go.

And one night in the canteen, I was sort of kidding with one of the boys and said, "Now, which one of the nurses up there is it that makes all you fellows want to go up to Nancy?" The sergeant looked up and said, "Take the nurses, sister." He said, "You know, those women will stay all day and all night and drip Dakin's solution (which was the great...before the sulfa drugs and things to prevent infection). They'll stay all day and all night and drip Dakin's solution into an infection; and you know, if you go up to Nancy, you don't lose an arm or a leg."

MRS. CUTLER: Ah.

MISS ENGLE: And it really was a tribute. I think women have played and can play an even greater role in medicine in this country.

But the whole atmosphere of an acceptance of women had to be carried through so that you came out with...as Dr. Shaw always reminded us, we are not fighting the men; we are fighting the institution which does not recognize us, and we were with them when we are enfranchised.

There was always a very, very positive saying to those girls who were young and out campaigning on street corners in state elections. They said, "Do not be combative. Be positive. Make it understood that what we want are things that all of us want." And I think that was true.

Now, the big battle that we fought was getting your civil rights recognized, getting your power to collect your own wages, to have legal authority over your children, the right to serve on juries, which came slowly in many states, the right to enter business.

When I started traveling for the Suffrage Association, many hotels would not let a woman unaccompanied register in the hotel. And in many places, I stayed with the families of the suffragists because there wasn't a hotel there that they would want me to stay at that would allow a young woman to stay alone in a hotel.

And these things, you see, were things of custom and practice that had to be met and faced. Getting women into all state universities was a slow process. Getting them admitted into all of the professional schools took a long time and, as I say, it is not completed yet.

These were things that you did not...they were not the dramatic things, getting the vote, getting the right to collect the wages, getting the right to operate "femme sole" as an independent operator when you were a married woman. There were hundreds of small statutes or practices that had been upheld by the courts, and this was a long-time, patient job.

And the Committee on the Legal Status of Women was on really the legal and economic status. In this state, Mrs. Harvey Bickle and Mrs. George Musgrove (who's a woman lawyer in Prince Georges County), worked hard and long on that.

MRS. CUTLER: And who were some of the men who helped you? You must have had a number of men in the state and in Montgomery County.

MISS ENGLE: Oh yes, we did indeed, because you see, this was a county with a large Quaker element; and the Quakers were always out for woman's suffrage.

And we had — Governor Ritchie was very, very helpful. I'll never forget—we were down there early after his...you see, he was elected in the Twenties about that time — and he said, "Ladies, do you want us to put in a bill ratifying the suffrage amendment now that it has been ratified to the point that it's a law, it's a part of the Constitution?"

And Mrs. Elkins said, "Governor, you know, we wondered about that and decided no." She said, "We have some laws and some programs that we're going to put in that

are going to have pretty bitter opposition, some of it coming from the people who oppose suffrage and," she said, "we'd rather not have the legislature lined up on a pro and-con vote on this, which is a dead issue. We'd rather wait and push our legislation."

And he laughed and said, "Now, don't you ladies get more political than I am." But the first bill that was a real battle where the anti-suffragists really lined up as an organized group to pppose it was the bill that went through; it was, I think, in about '22 (about that time)—that was the Shepherd-Towner Act that established the granting and aid program, Federal grants to the states for maternal and infants.

MRS. CUTLER: Now, the Shepherd-Towner Act was the Federal act?

MISS ENGLE: The Federal act.

MRS. CUTLER: And then there was a state enabling act.

MISS ENGLE: Each state had to enact a state enabling act, and then that...and to accept the Federal grant. You see, they matched the funds to establish...because at that time, the United States had the highest maternal and infant death rate of almost any civilized country.

MRS. CUTLER: So this was the time, wasn't it, that the clock ran out and Brooke Lee helped you?

MISS ENGLE: Oh, yes. This was the night that we put the bill in. There was an old gentleman, Senator Frick, who had led the anti-suffragists, and he was a mean old so-and-so, too, because he fought everything after we got it. A lot of the men came around and said, "Well, girls, it was a good battle, you know, and let's forget things and work together," — which we did.

But anyway, we introduced the bill to establish in the Maryland Department of Health a Division of Maternal and Infant Care and to appropriate money to match the Federal funds. And we put the bill in. We had half a dozen other bills dealing with civil rights and things, and we just could not get it out of committee. And Senator Frick was one of the ones in the Senate who was leading the opposition.

Well, we finally had a very good hearing in the House, and the doctors from Johns Hopkins came down and testified. And I'll never forget, Dr. William Welch was the head of the School of Public Health and Hygiene and he was on the advisory committee for the League of Women Voters. So was Dr. Alan Freeman. And they testified, and all the men came running in to see all the big-name doctors who were down there for us. So, we got it through the House, and it was over in the Senate—and we couldn't get it out of committee.

And finally, the very last day of the session, the night when they were turning back the clock and it was getting after the hour that we were supposed to adjourn and we couldn't get it out — well, Brooke Lee had said to Millard Tydings when I went down there that "Lavinia Engle was a childhood friend; we've grown up out here together" and that we had some good bills and things and he hoped Millard would help us out.

And he had. He had said to us, "Now, I'm fighting the Volstead Act, and so I'm not voting for Federal coming into the state; but if you're in a pinch, I will vote with you on every procedural matter. And if you really need my vote, I'll come across."

So that night, there we were, trying to get this bill out; and finally, Senator Frick had filibustered and he had a group of men who would pick it up when he stopped. And finally, it was getting on to 3 o'clock in the morning. So Senator Frick said, "The House has adjourned, and the Senate is illegally in session; and if this bill is brought on the floor, we will fight it in the courts."

And with that, he and six of his co-workers walked out. And the Governor was down there and everybody else was walking up and down the aisles outside in the corridors saying, "Now don't panic. Don't panic. The only thing they can introduce is — in a court, as they say they'll fight it — is the Journal of the House and the Senate, and both of them will show they adjourned at midnight."

So we got our bill on the floor and Manson of Calvert County had put it up for a vote and passed it. Well, then old Senator Frick was outside in the hall declaiming that the House was adjourned.

And "Uncle Albert" Almony, who was clerk of the House and came from Rockville here, would not be there to receipt for the bill, so that was illegal, too.

But Brook had had "Uncle Albert" up playing poker on the top floor, and "Uncle Albert" was cold stone sober and was available and did receipt for the bill; and sure enough, they took it into the court, and the court threw it out.

And that's how we got our program in state after state. It was over the opposition of the anti-suffrage group. You know, it's hard to understand how anybody could have carried the spiteful attitude into fighting a thing like that. But by and large, our Maryland men were good sports for it and...

MRS. CUTLER: And Brooke Lee really was one of your strong...

MISS ENGLE: Oh, Brooke, you know, was always a far-looking liberal. I know one of the men in Annapolis said once about Brooke, "Brooke is the outstanding statesman in your area and the worst politician, because he never could bear to suffer fools gladly." And he would come down with some very emphatic...you know—well, we were in a meeting in the county here, and I was arguing for something. It was a meeting of our Democratic group, and we were putting up some plans for a very progressive program. And they were sort of sitting glumly, and finally Brooke speaks up. He said, "Lavinia, what they're saying to you is—they know you're right, but they ain't going to do it."

MRS. CUTLER: I see. Now, you knew him as a child. Were you in school together?

MISS ENGLE: Oh, no. He went away to school. His mother died when he was a youngster.

MRS. CUTLER: I see.

MISS ENGLE: You see, we lived out here on Forest Glen Road and, as a matter of fact, Brooke courted my chum in his earliest days—his schoolboy

days—Catherine Wright, who...up on Forest Glen Road, we had our home. The Wrights—Dr. Wright had a sanitarium and was the local physician, and Catherine and I were the same age and grew up together. And all of us ran around with the same group to dances, and it was a small community, you know; and Catherine and Brooke were sort of, you know, dating.

He married one of the most beautiful girls you ever saw in your life—the first Mrs. Lee. She was so lovely that she was breathtaking.

But anyway, Catherine was one of the women who did go in for medicine, and she practiced here and then married a man up in Kensington by the same name, Wright, and went out to Chicago where she was on the faculty of the medical school. And last year, they named a building for her. So, one of our Montgomery County girls now is the Dr. Wright for whom the Dr. Catherine Wright Building at the University of Chicago is named. She's had a really wonderful career.

MRS. CUTLER: I see.

MISS ENGLE: Medicine is a real career for women, and we need doctors so badly, and we need doctors with the social approach that women have.

MRS. CUTLER: That's true, yes.

MISS ENGLE: But we had good cooperation, and we worked together in those early days in Montgomery County. The League was active in that sort of thing.

Brooke Lee came back from the war and found a shack town on the Eastern Avenue, you know. Here we had had a tremendous influx into Washington. People had been shoved in and out, and the county had suddenly begun to grow into a suburban county. And he brought an expert—planning expert—in from Philadelphia to do a study of the county. Governor Ritchie was elected as the reform candidate over the bosses in Baltimore, Sonny Mann and Frank Kelly.

MRS. CUTLER: And was Brooke Lee Comptroller under...

MISS ENGLE: He was Comptroller. He ran on that ticket. And then he called meetings of a group of us who were—the League of Women Voters members were included in that—the Chamber of Commerce, which wasn't much over in Bethesda, and people from all over the farm end of the county, and talked about the fact that this planner's report was that this was on the far high side of Washington.

We would get the uptown lords of Washington whether we wanted them or not, and we had to make up our mind what kind of people we wanted to invite into the county.

And Ritchie had approached the fact that our schools were in bad shape, and he brought Columbia University in to make a study of the state school system, out of which came our Equalization Act, the first in the United States, by which when a county or city had taxed to a certain point and didn't have enough for the minimum school standard, the state made up the difference. Now, he followed that for getting an equalization of property that was uniform throughout the state.

But anyway, we brought Columbia University in to do a special study here—how would you set up a school system and what should we do with the planning of this and that?

And what the planners recommended—we needed a modern school system. We needed a uniformed police. We needed, at least in the two suburban areas, a full-time commissioner; and the commissioners needed the sort of staff...we had at that time, the Park and Planning program was launched, and that was to buy up the stream beds and build the county so we held control both of the water supply and of the stream beds, so that we had the green areas for recreation and playgrounds and things of that sort.

Now, all of this was costing money. Our home on Forest Glen—our taxes were trebled within those two or three years, and it was the movement at that time —many people, most people of large means and many people, had a city home and country home

out here, you see, which is still one of our problems—the problem that the District is in a vise. It's the only city in the world that cannot extend its boundary and take in more land.

But anyway, Brooke's understanding and his father's — you see, Senator Lee was the one who put across our direct primary act. He was a liberal Senator who resigned from the Senate to run as Governor and was defeated because of his belief that we had to...they were an old county family, the Lees and the Blairs and the Brookes.

I remember when Mrs. Blair Jessup, who was Brooke's aunt, I think—she was one of the Brookes—owned that park that's up at Georgia Avenue and Eastern Avenue, and that was one of the old homesteads there. And she said to him, "Brooke, I'm going to will that property to you." And he said, "Oh, no you don't, Aunt Jenny." He said, "That's the last stand of original oaks in this area, and the trees are being cut down now; and you're going to will that to the county, and you're going to put in it that they cannot cut a hardwood tree without consent of the State Forestry." And that's how we got that park.

MRS. CUTLER: I see.

MISS ENGLE: But it was planning for green places, open places; and now parks and our police...it was decided that there would be no development of the suburban area. It would be development of the total county.

MRS. CUTLER: I see.

MISS ENGLE: And when we put through a standard for schools, it was for all the schools; and we went far beyond the minimum standards for the state. When we put in a police department, they policed the whole county.

MRS. CUTLER: Now, before he ran for Comptroller, did he have any governmental position?

MISS ENGLE: Oh, no. He was just fresh out of the Army.

MRS. CUTLER: When he became Comptroller.

MISS ENGLE: No, he ran with Ritchie, you see, on a reform ticket. And then, later, he was Speaker of the House. But mainly, he was always the

person who...he has a vivid imagination and a capacity to see far beyond the immediate. That was what the man said—he was a statesman, and he really was.

And Montgomery County took the lead. Prince Georges County was dominated by the southern part of the county's rural to the point that they never did spend the money to do the thing until long, long years later that made it possible to make this country so desirable to live in.

It's that type of young leadership we need to develop in this group that we're going to take on at 18. I found...you know, when we developed the League and I was their executive secretary, we had a Junior League at every college in the state that had women.

MRS. CUTLER: I wonder if you could provide us with some names of some of the people who were active, both the young students and also any teachers. You said that you reached them through the teachers.

MISS ENGLE: You have Lillian Wilson, who is the wife of Dr. Herman Wilson, who was the head of Asbury Methodist. His son now is—was—the president of our Junior League at the University of Maryland when she was a student there.

Dr. Eleanor Pancoast, who is now retired and living out here in the county, was the head of the Goucher Economics Department.

Dr. Ola Long, who wrote for us our book on the government of Maryland; Frank ( ) incidentally, wrote his "Great Game of Politics" after he gave a series of talks at our League on that.

We had any number of...Dr. Catherine Gallagher, Dr. Mary Wilhelmina Williams—these were the teachers who...and what we developed in some of the schools very successfully was, if the girls took on a project that was something that meant that they did studies, if they had a local election and they went out and studied how it was carried on and what was done, attended the meetings, they could turn in a thesis and get credit for that, you see.

MRS. CUTLER: This could be done today, with the emphasis on independent study. It could work in very beautifully.

MISS ENGLE: And those girls were wonderful...