

LOBBYING AND THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

Interview

with

LAVINIA ENGLE

by

Phyllis Levine

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MS. LEVINE: I'm going to put the date on here. It's February 27, 1971, at Lavinia Engle's home. I have an interesting question for you today, I think. If you had to choose the one person that you have known, personally, in the County who had the most to do, the most influence on the growth of Montgomery County, who would you choose?

MISS ENGLE: Well, E. Brooke Lee.

MS. LEVINE: E. Brooke Lee.

MISS ENGLE: He was quite young, although he was out of college and was an officer in our local, you know, (inaudible) thing, and as such went overseas with our County regiment and came back a major and took a look-see at what had happened during the few years of the war in developing almost a -- well, it was just almost a slum right on the line between the District and Maryland.

And he called in a group of the officials of the County, the County Commissioners and a few other county officers, a group of persons including myself and people who were interested in improving the County and handling this influx and said that he recommended that we bring down a city planner from Philadelphia he had looked into who would be the person to deal with this type of suburban development.

And the group agreed. So the planner came; he spent quite some time and he studied the County and went into the social and sociological aspects as well as the physical aspects.

MS. LEVINE: Do you recall who the planner was?

MISS ENGLE: I couldn't remember this now. He'd be in all of the records. Some of the records that you should get for the County are Brooke Lee's own private records because he was just a citizen. About that time

Governor Ritchie was then back from years in Washington during the War, where he had been the legal counsel for the War Industries Board. And he was going to run for Governor and persuaded Brooke to run as Comptroller, the intent being to do something about what had become a rather scandalous situation with the so-called city bosses in Baltimore (Sunny Man and Frank Kelly).

And they were beginning to build up an organization that was somewhat similar to that in both New York and Philadelphia, and it was not the best kind of political organization. So, anyway, the planner's report was that this was the high north side of Washington; whether we liked it or not, that was the area that would get the first settlement of people from Washington.

He did not go too much into the detail that I think is an important aspect of the situation here now, and that is that Washington is, as far as I know, the only city in the world which cannot expand its borders. You see, it was given to -- the area which is now Washington, D.C. originally had a land grant also in Virginia but that didn't appear then to be necessary, so all of the Maryland land was taken, which included the little town of Georgetown.

He said, "You must make up your minds as to the type of development out here that you want. Now if you want people who are financially able to build and maintain the sort of homes you like, who would be interested in the sort of County development and improvement, you have to set up a plan that will meet those standards."

And he said, "With that, I think you can control your development." So the group voted pretty much unanimously that we'd go ahead with that. And the plans that were developed included, as far as the County Commissioner set-up, a full-time County Commissioner in Silver Spring and one in Bethesda, with an office that served as headquarters for all County business that had to be conducted.

MS. LEVINE: About what year? About what year was this?

MISS LUGLE: This was in the early twenties. I couldn't, without looking--I don't remember the exact..., but all of this was in full swing and in a period, by 1925. Then they said you have the problem that a sheriff can no longer really handle the question of policing a County that is adding to its population like this.

And you need a trained police force. You will also..and then went through the problem of zoning and of County planning. At the same time, Governor Ritchie had

taken a look-see at the state schools, the local County schools throughout the state, and had brought in Columbia University which was then recognized as the outstanding public school teaching-training center.

And they made a comprehensive study and said that we would have to meet the statewide school problems with financial aid because the difference between the financial resources for a county like Montgomery and Garrett County, or say St. Mary's was just too much to then expect those counties then to meet the sort of standards that should be set and that we should have state standards below which no county system or city system would be permitted to fall.

And to make it possible for them to meet that, they developed the State Equalization Fund, which is still in operation. And under that, when a county or a city had taxed up to a certain point that was thought to be as much tax as they should levy, and the amount that was gained from it was not enough to run the standard school system, then the state, from the Equalization Fund, gave the county or city the amount of money they would need. Those standards included teacher training,

It included entirely new textbooks of a more modern type. It represented a thorough overhauling of everything and some recommendations on school building. Well, all of this was submitted in one of our first elections with bond issues, you see, to finance it where it couldn't be financed on direct taxes. We had to have some new schools. The schools were in a pretty wretched state.

MS LEVINE: Well, now, wait a minute. Tell me about this group, now---E. Brooke Lee's group that you talked about. Now I don't understand quite how it fit into the government.

MISS ENGLE: Well, it was a group of concerned citizens. The public officials at that time, of course, were the County Commissioners, the sheriff, the public health officer (whose dealings then were pretty largely just putting up scarlet fever signs and looking after a drainage which was apt to bring on a typhoid epidemic or any other epidemic and contagious disease).

There was very little more than that. You had your election staff of volunteers and a few employed people. You had then your schools, your health department, and your sheriff, constituted, you see, practically all of the government that a County had, formally.

The group that were called together represented the--well, a banker from Sandy Spring, where they have one of our oldest banks, and...

MS. LEVINE: Do you recall the names?

MISS ENGLE: I couldn't possibly. You can get a report, I'm sure, of this in the County records. You also--he also called the farmers in the neighborhood who had status of being landowners of considerable size and men of considerable judgment.

One of them, who was one of the first to run of that group for County Commissioner was a man named Diamond, John Diamond from Gaithersburg, generally called Buck Diamond. And he had a very, very handsome dairy farm, very modern, very well equipped and all of that. So, with that, you went into a new era.

We have, for instance, the problem of County police and a group of us that were on the committee that worked on that, we had long discussions with people from other counties, not necessarily in Maryland, on "how did you move to establish in a semi-rural but growing suburban area, the right sort of police system?" In the beginning there were several decisions made.

One, that all services and things that were developed were to be county-wide. There would be no developing a superior school system in the suburban area; or having the police only police the suburban area. It was to be a county-wide program.

And, among other things, about that time, not immediately, the question then, of sanitation arose and the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission was established, and the Park and Planning Commission. The Park and Planning Commission was immediately set to the job of acquiring the streams and the land on the side of these streams for water supply, working with the Suburban Sanitary for that, and, as a planning group that would plan for the future, you see.

E. Brooke Lee said at one of those meetings, "If we don't buy for parks, for land on either side of these streams, it will go out of sight as to price and we will never be able to handle it and that was the beginning of the purchase for parks of the land on either side of the streams that furnished water for the Suburban Sanitary Commission."

So all of this went forward with a concerned civic group, you see, who were interested; and I know the question of the police, it was decided—I happened to be on that particular committee—it was decided that we would recruit the best we could and we would then put them in training before they went on the job.

The only really good police training school that could be located was out in California. So these men were recruited and we decided that all of this would be paid for by the County and that we would then require that they keep up with the growth of the job by having a provision in which those that went back for additional training for which the County would pay and had the University of Maryland prepared to take over some of it, would get a raise in salary.

One of the funniest incidents of this whole business was the famous police uniform business and the County Commissioners were handling a lot of the fiscal matters. So they asked for bids on police uniforms and very proudly exhibited one that they had decided was the most inexpensive and the thing that they would take.

Well, I shuddered and so did several others, and said, "But this is...it doesn't look like anything—it looks cheap, but it isn't good material." Well, I have said occasionally, I think there probably...Buck Diamond and Lacey Shaw (who was to be our Silver Spring commissioner) and Brooke Lee were the only men in that group who ever paid more than \$59.50 for a suit of clothes.

But we talked the whole group into the fact that we just had to do something better than that. Both Brooke and several other men there had been overseas, had been in the Army, so had (inaudible), and we said that if you put a man in uniform that is shoddy and doesn't look like anything, you utterly destroy his morale.

We've seen the Army, and whether they, in the speed of getting people overseas, had just a great pack of Army uniforms and if that anywhere near fit a man, why he had to put that on and wear it, and they looked like the devil and knew it, and they just were ashamed of it. So, anyway, we rejected those bids and went after some of the really good uniform houses to design and furnish it.

Well, when they came, the one that certainly was the pick of the group, and the one which is pretty much what they wear now, was \$150 a uniform. I thought some of those farmers would pass out. But I said, "Well, now, look--these men have got to have a uniform of the type of material that can take getting soaked and wet in a storm, or the snow or sleet, go to the cleaners and come back looking good." And the men who wear these would be able to go home to their wives and sweethearts and say, "Well, how do I look?" And know that they're going to say, "Oh, John, you're so handsome or some..." (Laughter) And so anyway, and they went for training and still go.

I know a boy of one of our young officers here--he was talking to me not long ago and he said, "You know, I'm going to get my degree next year." And I said, "Oh, wonderful, what are you going to get it in? Police management or..." "Oh, no," he said, "I've taken those courses. I'm getting it in sociology."

Well, you know, that's one reason that we have admittedly the best police force in this area. The highest, the lowest degree of crime, the highest degree of real efficiency. And of maintaining order. We have fewer crimes and not the sordid type of crime.

They are having an awful time with drug habits, but so is everyone, and I think they're getting on top of it.

Our schools went right up when we got people in. We also had a provision in the school, and this was statewide, that teachers who went away for summer school courses and improved their background got a raise in salary. We also have the fact that this applied to all teachers.

And one of our early League exploits, one of the negro teachers from—not from Montgomery County—told one of our officers that he had taken all of the courses, he had really had added a lot and he thought, improved his work, but he had never gotten the raise in salary. Well, this was a county that wasn't quite as actively interested in pushing up standards, I suppose.

But anyway, we tried by argument and by some support, and nothing happened. So Mrs. Ellicott, our president, said, "You know, I think we've got to get the decision from the courts on the meaning of this law and regulation." So she paid the lawyer and we took it into court and the court took it clear to the Court of Appeals and they held that any law that was drawn that applied to teachers and teachers' salaries must have no racial connotation.

And the man got his salary. I think one reason that we have as little trouble with integration as we did was that the teachers had been given salaries so that we got well trained and good teachers in the negro group as well as the white group and that they knew that they would have fair treatment.

And as you know, Maryland had very little upset in all of that. Now it was the type of...for one thing, I think the one thing that was very important was — the County was approached as a whole. We never permitted a suburban area sense of superiority to mean that there were conflicting elements within the county.

And I think also the fact that when we brought in experts and they gave advice, we took the advice. Now our first big school bond issue was something that had to be sold to the voters and we put on a campaign where we had open-air meetings, and in that day those were, and they still are, <sup>a</sup>very much better way to get at the people who are in opposition.

People who are in support of a thing will go into a hall and listen to a speaker. The people you need to get are people who are opposed to it, who, if you are talking from the back end of an automobile or on a wooden platform in a parking lot or on a street corner, they will come and ask the questions they think will



embarrass you, which are the things that are underlying it in their own mind.

And we carried the County time after time for a raise in taxes and a raise in bonds for improving our schools, buying park plans. I was at a meeting the other day when one of our—the head of one of the divisions in the park—pointed out that we have the highest percent of park and recreational land of any county in this area, and they still have considerable land that they would like to acquire.

What we had not anticipated when the developers came in—they wanted to build and build as close as possible and all of that. And the Wheaton complex, a Wheaton shopping center was developed—and although there was advice from the Park and Planning that this was a dangerous business without allowing open land that would absorb the rainfall, you see.

But you have a large tract there where you haven't even a line of trees on the street and you have all of that place (inaudible) when we had the storms three years ago and two years ago, and one two years ago came down and flooded Sligo Park. It tore up all of the bridges. It wrecked the tennis courts.

Two firemen, you may remember, were killed when a car was stuck in the middle of the bridge, and now we face the problem of what is to be done to prevent another storm like that, and the storm water will have to be caught somewhere. And from now on, we have the same trouble with Seneca, where the developer was determined to put in a development that would eventually be one of these towns which I think are pretty bad. Because they are built with, well, there's no true community there to begin with, and the things are too... Take the town of Columbia here, which is beautifully planned. I was up there for a meeting, and a group of the citizens took us driving to show us what had been done there, and I made some pleasant remarks and he said, "Well, you know, there's some aspects that we didn't anticipate." He said, "You know, it's laid out in what they call villages—we'd call them wards. Well, when the people in a village have lived there for five years, they may vote for the City Council." At present the City Council there consists solely of members of the staff of the insurance companies that are building it."

"So," he said, "they did not tell us that our elected member would have a voice but no vote." Now there you have a city which they anticipate developing to the size of 100,000 and they are starting out with the statement that it will be a company town, controlled by the company offices; that the people may protest or they may vote in meetings, but they do not have the right to vote.

Now, I think they'll upset that. I called someone at the Attorney General's office and asked—I said, "What are you going to do? This thing in Columbia and down in Reston when Gulf Oil made a statement after they took over Reston that their people who had invested in bonds or bought stock in the Gulf Oil had no reason to worry because Gulf had exclusive rights to the sale of both heating and motor oil in the whole of Reston."

I asked him, "What are you going to do about restraint of trade?" He said, "You know, we don't know. This is a new problem."

MS. LEVINE: Could we come back to that early group that you said you personally participated in the police committee. Did you...

MISS ENGLE: Well, I was on the general committee.

MS. LEVINE: On the general committee, too. So you had personal dealings with Brooke Lee and the other people on the committee?

MISS ENGLE: Well, Brooke was at the meetings. He was never a person who fell into the trap of trying to run things. He was the person with probably more education and certainly more concern than most of them who were there, but there were open discussions and hot arguments and you'd have, well, there were several different types of meetings.

You'd have men and women of a group who were interested in certain aspects, you see, who would be at one meeting or another. And then you had regular, political party meetings. Well, all of this was discussed and described.

And the various clubs, Women's Federation, Women's Clubs, the Men's Clubs and all of that were beginning to develop in the county—and Women's Federation was an

older organization. And they talked it and discussed it and you came to a consensus, as we do on what was good to do and it moves ahead.

There were sharp differences of opinion. Then, after a certain number of years, we had this drive for a Charter. There were some things about that initial Charter that were not, and the present Charter, that were by no means the perfect answer. And there have been difficulties with it.

I think the present difficulty between the Council and the Executive Officer—that was patterned pretty much on the City Manager-type thing, but the City Manager, in most cities, was a person who is professionally trained for the job. There were excellent city manager departments in most of the state universities. And was selected by the representative of the community in the Council. Those started pretty much in Cincinnati. That was the father of the city council movement. And I think the present difficulty with Mr. Gleason, contesting for power, and the Council, really representing the people—more than one person like that and certainly he...I think our County has a genuine liberal attitude toward government and social problems.

I very much doubt that Mr. Gleason has. I think that his attitude on the school budget this time was indicative of that. And I think people in this County will pay whatever is necessary to have good schools.

Well, I think there's all ways in which probably school administration and school management have to again catch up with the times. I don't think teachers should have to do a great deal of the purely clerical work they have to do. I don't think social workers should.

You should be able to use a professional person to the limit of his professional capacity and the more or less drudgery of a lot of that (necessary, no doubt, but pretty arduous), just ordinary office work should be done by good office staff.

MS. LEVINE: Could we drop back again? When did you first know Marie and Jim Bennett? And did you work with them on County problems?

MISS ENGLE: Oh yes. I first knew Jim Bennett really well when he was Director of Prisons and one of our lead projects in which the League and several organizations joined was the establishment of the Women's Prison at Alderson.

Up to that time, women were confined to--in the Federal Penitentiary. And we were able, as you may know, to bring in a very modernized program, and we had Jim Bennett's support throughout that.

We knew him even better here locally, when, after he retired and came here tollive. And Marie was always very active in public affairs and so on.

Jim really introduced modern penology in the Federal System and, as you probably know, we still have a long way to go to know really what to do and to apply what we already know we should do.

MS. LEVINE: Tell me something about them personally--what they were like to work with and the kind of people they were, both Marie and Jim.

MISS ENGLE: Marie was--had great charm, as you may know, and she also was quite well educated and quite up on modern social thinking, and her work in the League of Women Voters was primarily in the later years when we have developed a strong local organization.

In the very beginning, the League's activities were necessarily interpretive to women throughout the state of what we wanted the organization to be. And because of that, because it took time to really get interest focused and brought to bear on a strong League organization, the State League had a monthly luncheon meeting to which women from all over the state came.

It depended on whether they were interested in that particular program or not, and we brought distinguished speakers, those from our own universities and other universities. We also ran a series of meetings on governmental operation.

I know we had one series with Frank Kent, who was at that time the editor of the Baltimore Sun, and he called his series, "The Great Game of Politics." He afterwards brought it out as a book.

But he talked about party organization, what women should know about affiliating with a party, working from within with it—that sort of thing.

He was a — I do not know that he had more than just beginning courses of sociology, but he knew an awful lot about the factors behind a criminal life. And how you approached it, what you did with your young offender, who was in a penitentiary.

I know that he did radio work with the state, with the localities, and helped in establishing modern programs.

Well, Marie was—she had not only intellect and a good deal of force, but she had great charm. And she really did. She was head of the League after I had gone to a new job in a Federal office, and consequently, I did not work with her as intimately as I did with the other members.

We had organizations all over the Eastern Shore and in Southern Maryland and, of course, a big one in Baltimore. In 1922, when we had the women of Latin America at our national convention with the League there, our membership in Baltimore rose to 2,000 at that time.

And it was a good, active organization. It was organized in wards and we had chairmen—well, we got a census of how many women there were who were going to vote. Women took it. Each group took their own ward and got the names and affiliation and areas of interest, and it had a very genuine appeal to women in terms of its educational motive.

The fact that from the beginning we tried to know why certain conditions existed, what were some of the political issues and what were the factors in them that we should know. Mrs. Cott had organized the conference on the cause and cure of war.

She used some of the money that she had inherited from Mrs. Leeley, who had been interested in international affairs. And that meeting, that organization worked with the League and was largely attended by League members.

They held a national conference, I think, each year, maybe every other year, in Washington and studied the problems of the economic factors underlying World War I. They were strongly in favor of the Locarno Pact and in the decision that we would cancel out many of our international debts, where the United States was the one to whom most of the money was owed.

And helped these countries that were so devastated to rebuild and to assure democratic government after the challenge that World War I made to democracy. It was a statewide concern and this was before the population explosion really hit us; that, I suspect was unique, although I mean for the League generally over the country.

It had many reasons to succeed at that time, apart from just the fact that women were newly enfranchised and we had this settling of the many, many problems that the War had brought. We had this need to really tackle the whole educational system in the United States.

It was 1920 before we got girls admitted to the University of Maryland, and then we had to battle to get a dormitory for them so they could come from all over the state and live there. There were a good many other states where similar activities went on.

The fact that our Committee on the Legal Status of Women (and in our state that was headed by...going to think of her name in a minute...Prince Georges woman, she was a lawyer, and a Mrs. Harvey Bickle in Baltimore, who was also a lawyer.)

And going through the statutes and producing the amendments for woman's status as a property owner, the protection of her inheritance, her control and share responsibility between husband and wife in regard to children and the fact that until then, in most states, she could not sign a contract. It had to be signed with her and her husband together. There were so many, many things like that that sometimes a very simple correction was all that was needed and sometimes it was a rather major one.

Those things were the things that, I think, the average woman today--man or woman--it would be hard for them to think back to a time when a woman who had property in her own name married and then could not handle that property except with that husband's consent.

It was a long jump ahead and the vote was the thing that gave women the political power to ask that such things be done. [But they're all out of other things.] We had a commission to study obsolete laws.

And they came up with a perfect volume of them. One of them [was] always amused us. We had, on the Eastern Shore, a law that forbade a slave owner or a man having [contracted] contract workers who were more or less slaves working for him--could not compel them to eat turtle more than twice a week.

Oh, my, they had a lot of funny laws and they had to be--some of them--had to be just repealed; others had to be revised.

Then we tackled the question of the training schools for boys and girls who were delinquent, so-called.

At that time they were either privately run or church-run institutions where the state or the county paid most of the bills and our state schools for girls and our state school for boys and for the two races--separate schools for the races--were established.

Mrs. Ellicott, her sister-in-law, Mrs. LeMoyno had been on the board of the school for white girls and another relative on the negro school for girls. I think I told some of us -- it may have been on these rolls. We consulted the experts in the field of juvenile delinquency and training schools.

One of the questions that was asked them at that time was, "Should we have the two races separated in separate schools?" And the adviser, who was a woman from California and again I'll think of her name in a minute--she was a nationally known expert in this field, said, "You must remember that these girls are adolescent in both races. We have found that where girls are segregated in this fashion,

color may be the substitute for sex and you have more homosexuality and we would advise that until you have gotten your programs going and set that you maintain separate schools."

So we had to start with getting a board for each of these, and Mrs. Ellicott and I went down and talked to Governor Ritchie. And said to him, "Now, Governor, we are thinking about the boards that will administer these schools and the problem of the colored school for colored girls is one we want to discuss with you."

"We think that that board should include several capable colored women and that the staff should be, as far as possible, a negro staff." And he thought a bit and said, "Ladies, you're right. I'm going to count on you to find the men and women to do that; because," he said, "these will be the first important appointments of negro women to government positions and we want it to be a success."

Well, we were able to get excellent women and we had the help of the University. Johns Hopkins was very helpful [and] through Esther Richardson, who was the child psychiatrist on their staff, in helping us build up a truly able, medical staff, including a psychiatrist.

We discovered that many of these girls were there for absolutely no reason. One girl was there because she had sassed the sheriff. Well, [we worked] it out; both schools were built on a cottage plan and we had—we emphasized education and put in a good educational program, picking up where they were, educationally.

It had to be, you know, sort of an ungraded school. And we had a very strong and sound psychiatric examination and psychiatric treatment in both schools because many of these girls were the result of broken homes, of homes of bitter misunderstanding between wife and husband, and girls who had been genuinely neglected, and you had to do that.

Then we worked on the job of when they were parolled and parolling them to private homes where there would be some supervision and some understanding. And the school, really, was outstanding, both of those schools. The same was true in the boys' school.



MS. LEVINE: Where were they located?

MISS ENGLE: The girls' school was the old Betsy Patterson estate and there was a beautiful little chapel there. So we had a routine by which a rector or a minister from each of the denominations came there on Sunday in rotation to preach.

And we had a vested choir and the girls loved it. You know girls always love to dress up. Dr. Carey Weaver Smith was our first head of the school for white girls and she was very—a very...what would you say... she was fond of music and knew a great deal about it.

So we had quite a musical program and our vested choir had excellent training and really those girls' voices were beautiful. That little chapel was so popular that girls who had been there used to go back there and get married—have their wedding there.

Our colored girls were, of course — a problem of getting your staff to begin with took time, but we did get good staff, and the girls...were required to take a good deal of education.

And when they came out—and it was easy in a very short time to get a girl back both physically and psychologically and educationally to where she could be paroled.

There were a lot of things in those early days when all of us on the League board and staff kept very closely in touch with because there were so many things that were new and that you knew you had to discuss in all of these various meetings.

But there were also, well, there were many things that a long period of study frequently had to be shortened so that you could do something when it needed to be done and do it with both speed and understanding. So a great many local problems that the localities would take up, our local needs, and they would come in to discuss it with the state League. Our committee chairmen were pretty busy meeting with

groups to talk about problems, educational, health problems, and all of that.

And there was a very, very happy relation between the other women's organizations. The National League had organized the Women's Joint Congressional Committee which had as members the Federation of Women's Clubs, the professional women's organizations, business women's organization, even some that were purely social and literary.

And we had a similar one in Maryland. I have been grieved to find that the Joint Committee meets, but it by no means takes the — the National one takes the active part that it did in those days in studying and supporting legislation.

In our Maryland group, we had a very strong group and we were well represented for all of the religious organizations (because that was necessary). We had a problem of—several of the religious orders ran homes for delinquents (House of Good Shepherd for Girls).

And it was in the middle of Baltimore City (I think it has moved; I don't know)—high brick wall around it and the girls had practically no recreational opportunities and the chief thing they did, they learned to do beautiful laundry, which made a lot of money for the institution—fine laundry, vestments for churches and things like that.

And we were very anxious to do something about that; not to have the rule that any girl of the Catholic faith had to go to that institution because the other one was going far ahead of them.

So, "Charlie" Woodworth, who was a very liberal donor to her church (and had been the head of the...what do you call it...it's the big Catholic women's organization — International Federation of Catholic Alumni, IFCA. And we went to call on the Reverend Mother, who was head of the Institution. She is a very old lady. And we did not get very far—in fact, we sort of figured that we just made a polite call and told her what was being done elsewhere. And it ended there. Well, on

the way out of the Institution, a little Sister who had taken us in, the other was taking us out and unlocking the door because the doors of that institution were kept locked. You see, at (Partrove's) the girls lived cottage system and they had basketball outdoors and softball and they ran all over the place and had their education too. And she took us to the door, and then when she put the key in, she said, "The Reverend Mother Director General is in France; she's going to be in this country this Fall. Her name is...and the address is..."

We took the hint. A letter went off to the Reverend Mother Director General saying that we were interested in the problem of institutional care for girls, particularly delinquent girls; we're doing something in the state in that connection and would like an opportunity to talk with her.

Well, back came a letter from her secretary saying that Reverend Mother would be here for several months, but she had to visit institutions all over the United States; that when she arrived, that she, the secretary, would be with her and she would contact us and make an appointment.

So, sure enough, when she came, we got a call and we went to meet her and it was herself and her secretary; not members of the local staff were present. So we were able to let our hair down and tell her what the problems were and what we hoped to do.

Well, she said, you know, these are the new things that our Order must know how to approach. Now, she said, the Reverend Mother here is an elderly woman and she has never visited the Mother House in France and I am taking her back with me for a long visit so that she may see many of the things and talk with many of the people that she's never met.

That was that, and we got a brand new, bright, young head for the Institution, and a very great change in their pattern. But it was a case of you didn't try to do things, you know, by force. We were not militant, in that sense, but to try to

draw in thinking men and women. We had a very successful, statewide series of meetings on international matters tied in with the meeting that the cause and cure-all forum was going to have in Washington so our women would go well prepared.

Dr. Cathryn Gallagher, of Goucher, was head of the European History Department; Mary Willamena Williams, was the head of the all-American History Department (and they gave the lectures—a series of lectures for women who did not necessarily have to be League members).

Well, we packed the hall. We had over 100 women attending those meetings. And the men in the families of the women who belonged to the League said, "You have all of those meetings in the daytime and none of us can come and we think that's unfair. You should have them at night-time." So we talked it over, Esther Ogdon, who was for many years the treasurer of the old National American Women's Suffrage Association, is the executive for the Foreign Policy Association, and they have a plan by which they had dinner meetings at which two speakers present a problem, an international problem, frequently presenting two sides of the question. And then there is a long and heated discussion from the floor and we said we would start foreign policy but you boys have got to take on some of the work. These were, most of them, the younger men whose wives were active in the League—lawyers, doctors, businessmen, Albert Hutzler, Dick Cleveland and George Shriver, Jr.

It was a very good group. Well, you know, we had those foreign policy meetings up to a point where we would have between 300 and 400 people at those dinner meetings. We had to move from one place to another to get a place to house them.

And it was a tremendous shot in the arm for the men in the community on international affairs and this was at a time when we were still settling World War I financial, boundary and devastation problems.

And we could follow up out of this—I would say one of the most forward-looking group of professional and business men in the field of international affairs that any city in this area had.

There was a great deal of interest and our meetings were always open to any of the men who were free to come, but of course the time was such that they rarely ever could.

MS LEVINE: Was this in Baltimore or...?

MISS ENGLE: Yes, it was in Baltimore and circulated through the state with the results that we had a lot of people come in for the meetings from the nearby counties.

One very interesting thing that I may not have mentioned--when we were organizing the State League of Women Voters--I had worked with the National Suffrage Association across the country and also in home grounds and in the South, and we had many fine, intelligent, Negro women, who were members of the Suffrage Association. We had a very able woman lawyer right here in Washington--Ida Church Terrell. She was really a very smart gal. So, we said to the group that were called together from the old suffrage group who were familiar with racial matters, "Now, we are organizing this organization to teach women, afford them a chance to learn to use their vote intelligently; that's its purpose. Now if we restrict membership in any way, what we are going to do is to turn the women who do not belong to the League over to exploitation by your less forward-looking politicians. And we think that would be a mistake."

Well, it was argued thoroughly. The Civic League had a Women's Auxiliary, composed of Negro women, but we decided that it would be a bi-racial organization and that we would definitely go after and bring in the leading Negro women in the state to discuss it and to help build up our membership.

And we had a very good membership. Then we had the problem, now what are we going to do with our big luncheon that we are planning? So a committee of us, Mrs. Ellicott, Mrs. Edward Guest Bison, (who was the head of the Baltimore Cotillion, which is the debutante ball and the smartest thing socially that goes on), the wife

of the owner and editor of the Baltimore Sun—I'll think of her name in a minute—Mrs. Woodruff, who is very active in the Catholic group, and myself.

We went to the leading hotels and said, "We will be having a regular monthly luncheon. We hope to have women from all over the state. We hope to have from 100 to 300 women attending these meetings and we would like to have the same hotel, give us the same day in a month and plan with you for the sort of luncheons that women like—light and not too expensive."

And they were all keen to have it. Then Mrs. Ellicott said, "And, of course, you understand that our organization is one to educate women to vote and we will have women of all races and all religions." And I will say that the managers of the hotels all made (almost identically the same answer: "Mrs. Ellicott, you are renting the ballroom for a meeting. Who attends is your business, not ours." So our Negro women were in from ground floor, from the very start. And we had some very able women in Baltimore, very able women, and professional women, business women, and it was a very happy solution.

I will say that one funny thing came out of it when we had this International Convention in '22, and we had women from every South and Central American country, and Nancy Aster decided to come, so she really did bring a gang. And I had a hectic call from the State Department saying, "Miss Engle, about this meeting you're having—do you realize that the wife of the President of Haiti is one of your guests who will be coming and that they are Negroes?"

And I said, "Yes, of course I do." "What are you going to do?" "Well," I said, "I'm going to make them delegates to the meeting"—just wanting to lead him on. "Where are they going to stay?" "Well," I said, "originally, we had reserved for the wife of the President of Haiti at the Belvedere (which is a smart hotel), but Mrs. John Garrett has a chauffeur and a maid who speak French and she thinks that it would be better if she entertained her in her home and put them at her disposal so that she wouldn't have any language difficulty." (Laughter)

Our delegates stayed at the hotels where the other delegates stayed, and no, we didn't have a bit of trouble.

MS. LEVINE: Well, now, compared with those days, how do you think the League today shapes up with the way the League was when you were Executive Director?

MISS ENGLE: Well, I think the League has, to a marvelous extent, stayed with the recommendations made by that committee of the National American Woman Suffrage Association that said it should be an organization to study and cast an intelligent, thinking vote.

I think that to carry that out and stand by it, is a really fine achievement. Now, I think that we have reached a point where we tie our own hands by requiring study before you can take a position on something that suddenly develops.

Now, we had an escape hatch on this. In the initial Constitution of the League, and I have understood that there still is an escape hatch, but all too often I think there are things upon which the League should be able to take a position.

Now, you take this nursing home business that we're in the midst of. I don't think that there's any argument after that report by the three Deans of our state medical schools as to how serious the question is and what should be done about it.

I think we've perhaps gotten by sheer size where that has gone beyond just a concept to assure intelligent voting and has become a little bit of a problem of being able to be active—fast—and to be as effective as we should be in some fields.

Now, that would be my one criticism.

The League said that the League's activities should be non-partisan. We were not to get out and campaign for a candidate, as a League. I think we've almost gone to the point where we do not like, we are a little resistant, or maybe it's just we are a little afraid, of having League members be too active or be very active.

Now, we have Mrs. Calvin Gable as a Vice-President of the State League, who was the Vice Chairman of the Republican State Central Committee; I ran for the legislature.

I took leave of absence to do that and it was decided that we could profit by knowing more and having someone at the time we had some problems who would be able to get the inside line on some of these things and that if I took leave of absence, that was O.K.

MS. LEVINE: Did you win?

MISS ENGLE: Oh, yes. I was, as a matter of fact—I wouldn't repeat this anywhere—but I led the ticket as Ida Mae Garrett and Betty Scull did this time.

I ran the next time when we were going into local government for county commissioner here because we figured we needed someone who could serve and then write the stuff, you see.

At that time, to my regret then, I was beaten by six votes. And the thing that happened was, as Chairman of the Welfare Committee here in the County, I had to approve the bills rendered by the doctors for service that would be paid for by the County for medical, and that included individual welfare cases and the services given to people at the station house—the two station houses. And I really oughtn't to put this on a tape. They'll cut this out when they come. But we had a very active doctor in the other end of the County who was very active politically, as well as being supposedly a very excellent physician. I had a bill that came in for, I think it was \$900 and some dollars, for services rendered at a police station. But it was not signed by the sergeant in charge of the station, as it was supposed to be. So I called him and said, "Sergeant, you forgot to sign this." "Miss Engle, can I come over and talk to you about that?" So I said, "Sure." He came over to the office and said, "Now, well, you know this bill is a phony." He said, "He hasn't been in there. Here's the blotter. He hasn't been in there but once, when he came in to sew up a colored boy who had been in a knife fight."

"And," he said, "he does this every year and we think he does it to pay his taxes." "Well," I said, "I can't sign it." He said, "I felt I couldn't this time,



but he signed it; so we didn't." And he didn't get his money. And when he stormed at me, I said, "The police blotter didn't show any record of your having made such calls. I couldn't sign it."

So he got to his whole gang, which was, unfortunately in my party, the Democratic Party, and he didn't tell them why but told them that they were to cut me on the ticket because I was not a responsible person in a public office, etc., etc., etc.

Well, actually, this got around; and he was right bad several other ways, and it just turned enough of the vote for me to lose it.

Now, actually, I had no business doing it because I was at a point where, of course, the League had never been able to pay me much of a salary, and I hadn't expected it. But the Depression had hit us, prices had gone up, and I needed for my own good to be in a job where I got more money and where I could build up something for my old age.

So it was just a few years after that I was offered a job in the Social Security Administration and took it because I had done field work many years for the League and I went in to help set up a field organization for Social Security and stayed with them until I retired a few years ago.

And, of course, that meant I had an annuity as a Federal employee for all of those years. But, it was too bad; I hated to do it because I think we would have gotten — we haven't a book yet that gets down and comes to grips with what are all of the major problems of the local county structure for government throughout the United States.

You need the sociological factors, you need the patterning of what sort of a new group is growing up, what sort of schools do your people go to and come out of, and a lot of that, which still remains to be written.

We have never had a study of the relation of these counties to the District of Columbia; and this, I think, we should do.

Here is the District of Columbia, a piece of land that is -- has no state to which it can go and no machinery through which it can legally operate, except what they've set up in these joint conference committees.

It is, as far as I know--and I think I've said this earlier--the only city in the world that has no power to extend its boundaries.

Now, Baltimore City was one of our first free cities. I think it was the first in the country. Looking back in the history of that, I discovered, to my amusement, it was not that Baltimore City wanted to be free, it was that Baltimore County said this thing was a wicked place and a cesspool of iniquity, and they didn't want it in their pure little county, and they threw it out.

That's awfully exaggerated, but that was it. But when Baltimore City had outgrown its boundaries and, also, had created a -- it did not create a viable economic obstruction, as we do not here -- so the Legislature gave them the right to take part of Ann Arundel County and part of Baltimore County, you see.

MS. LEVINE: Yes, I see.

MISS ENGLE: And they expanded. What we have now is the District sitting there with the beautiful Federal buildings and some beautiful homes, but the mass of the people, when suburbia became a factor in big cities, the mass of the people who wanted to get out where they could play golf, where they could have a little more open air, or they could have more room, moved out into the several counties adjacent to Washington.

Then you have the fact that we had never provided for the influx of colored and white farm hands, who were displaced by the machinery.

MS LEVINE: Yes.

MISS ENGLE: And they had no place to live out here. I have searched this place for decent homes for all the colored people that I knew and was trying to help locate a place.

So they went in and bought the houses that had been allowed to run down, because they were not the expensive type of house that people who still stayed in the city wanted.

And you have created a situation in which, when I drive up to Montgomery General Hospital for treatment, early in the morning, every bus that passes stops and lets off colored women to go and work in the homes up there. Person after person will call you -- "Do you know a good person who will come and take care of the children? And do this, and that."

Also, the contractor up in Rockville told one of the girls he sent two station wagons down to the center of Washington every morning to bring his truck drivers out here.

Then you have the fact, you see, you have your wealthy group out here; you have your impoverished group in the city. And then you have the sort of thing that happens when a commercial committee headed -- and I was just reading the morning editorial on McMillan -- <sup>Former Chairman of House District Ctte?</sup> no one has a vicious racial attitude. And they try to punish the people of Washington for the fact that the colored laborers live there.

And we out here shut our eyes to the fact that we're collecting monies that -- when I was a child, we'd have a city home and this country home. We went in town when the school -- early into the fall -- we went in by train, first, and then by trolley, and then moved into the city for the winter, because we had to go to school, or the theater and other places you wanted to go.

And now, everybody lives out here all year-round. You wouldn't think of maintaining a city home downtown.

MS. LEVINE: Yes.

MISS ENGLE: So it is completely atypical. And I think we need a group who would sit down and study that, and come up with, either how Washington should be able to expand--which I think would be impossible-- into the counties. This really is the uptown wards of Washington City.

MS. LEVINE: Yes.

MISS ENGLE: And we've taken no review of the socio-economic effect in that.

MS. LEVINE: Yes.

MISS ENGLE: And I think it has to be done. We cannot continue. Washington's in the vise; it's being strangled by that. And yet, that's a factor we never get at. We talk about not wanting to give them— well, what about it? Who is "them"?

And we're having a completely...I know any number of women out here who would gladly pay for a competent maid.

MS. LEVINE: Yes.

MISS ENGLE: And again, we do not pay as much for that sort of — if you get a trained...if you get a girl in your kitchen who is well trained in economics—in household economy, you've got a person you can turn a lot of things over to.

MS. LEVINE: Sure.

MISS ENGLE: And you've got to pay for that.

MS. LEVINE: It would be a help.

(END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE ONE)

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