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## "Baby Suffragettes": Girls in the Women's Suffrage Movement across the Atlantic

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*Figure 1. Bessie Watson, The Piping Times, 1910.*

Paper

## “Baby Suffragettes” Girls in the Women’s Suffrage Movement across the Atlantic

McKenzi Christensen

**A**PRIL 1912, NEW YORK CITY: IT IS A RAINY MORNING AS A YOUNG schoolgirl steps up confidently onto the platform, facing a crowd of skeptical onlookers. “Miss Dorothy Frooms,” someone announces beside her, “the youngest suffragette in the world, a lady who is giving her early years to the cause of justice to women. Listen to her, you men who praise the ballot, the youngest, the most enthusiastic and the most intelligent of all the suffragists!”<sup>1</sup> Sixteen-year-old Dorothy clears her throat and begins to speak. Across the Atlantic, another sixteen-year-old, Dora Thewlis, kicks and screams as police officers drag her through the streets of London. Newspapers soon detail the arrest and prison sentence of “little Dora,” the newly famous “baby suffragette” who tried to storm Parliament with fellow woman’s rights suffragists.<sup>2</sup> Dorothy and Dora were among dozens of girls known in the United States and the United Kingdom, aged nine to twenty-one, who actively participated in the woman’s suffrage movement and thought of themselves as passionate suffragists. Newspaper articles documented the efforts of these young girls, highlighting and often criticizing their ages. Their activism was also recorded in diaries, memoirs, letters, and photographs. Despite the range of sources that

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1. “Girl Speaks Sans Riot” *The New York Tribune*, 28 April 1912.

2. “The Baby Suffragette,” *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 28 March 1907.

depict the involvement of young girls in the suffrage movement, few scholars have explored the topic.

Some historians have examined the role of girls within the larger woman's suffrage movement. Jill Liddington, in *Rebel Girls: How Votes for Women Changed Edwardian Lives*, addresses the broader woman's suffrage movement and highlights a dozen women involved in Northern England, several of which happened to be younger girls—girls like Dora Thewlis and Adela Pankhurst.<sup>3</sup> Her research shows that mothers and daughters often worked together for the vote. Liddington, however, does not discuss the implications of young girls participating in woman's suffrage and how that differed from the experience of adult women. In *Rise Up, Women! The Remarkable Lives of the Suffragettes*, Diane Atkinson similarly offers a broad history of the militant woman's suffrage movement across the United Kingdom.<sup>4</sup> She highlights dozens of suffragettes, including young suffragettes such as Olive Beamish and Nellie Hall. However, Atkinson does not address their involvement at length or the importance of these girls' young ages.

Focusing particularly on young girls, historian Carol Dyhouse's *Girl Trouble: Panic and Progress in the History of Young Women* surveys a range of issues that English girls faced from the early nineteenth century to the twenty-first century.<sup>5</sup> Dyhouse briefly discusses girls' involvement in the suffrage movement in the nineteenth century. She suggests that many school teachers—who were also passionate suffragists—inspired their students by introducing women's rights figures and role models to their students.

While some historians have brought attention to British girls participating in the woman's suffrage movement, fewer highlight American girls' involvement in the movement. Margaret McFadden, in her article "Boston Teenagers Debate the Woman Question 1837–1838," introduces two young American participants, Ednah Dow Littlehale and Caroline Wells Healey. McFadden analyzes the girls' correspondence about women's rights.<sup>6</sup> She identifies the

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3. Jill Liddington, *Rebel Girls: How Votes for Women Changed Edwardian Lives* (London: Virago, 2015).

4. Diane Atkinson, *Rise Up Women! The Remarkable Lives of the Suffragettes* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018).

5. Carol Dyhouse, *Girl Trouble: Panic and Progress in the History of Young Women* (London: Zed Books, 2014).

6. Margaret McFadden, "Boston Teenagers Debate the Woman Question, 1837–1838." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 15, no. 4, (1990).

continuity in how the girls wrote about women's rights as young girls and later as adults. McFadden reevaluates the way scholars see teenage correspondence as immature or juvenile, arguing that they should take them as seriously as writings by adult suffragists. Notably, she points out that young girls talked about women's rights using more personal language, suggesting that girls' sources create a more authentic look into the minds of women's rights activists.

Other scholars have focused on the role of age in the suffrage movement. Mary Celeste Kearney, in "Coalescing: The Development of Girls' Studies," highlights girls' activism within each wave of the feminist movement.<sup>7</sup> Kearney argues that the study of girls has been not only ignored by general scholarship but particularly by feminists. Arguing that feminists have had a long tradition of "uneasy identification and, sometimes, disidentification with girls," she notes the divide between adult suffragists who argued that attaching young girls to the suffrage movement would label the whole movement as childish.<sup>8</sup> Corrine Field's recent research on the generational divides between suffragists further shows how age played a role in how suffragists worked together.<sup>9</sup> Field argues that while most political movements have used children to represent possibility and the future, the suffrage movement allied themselves with older women to represent maturity, drawing a sharp line between minors and adults allied together in the woman's suffrage movement.

Finally, Berry Mayall highlights suffragists fighting for children's rights and encouraging youth to participate in politics.<sup>10</sup> In *Visionary Women and Visible Children, England 1900–1920*, he argues that some suffragists looked beyond the vote to broader social issues such as socioeconomic impacts on children. He also draws attention to youth organizations such as the Junior Suffragettes, created by Sylvia Pankhurst, and shares examples of how they inspired young people to stand up for their rights. Like other scholars, Mayall argues that children and youth are not "deficient or incomplete adults, not developmental projects, not just objects of concern," but capable of thinking and reasoning.

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7. Mary Celeste Kearney, "Coalescing: The Development of Girls' Studies." *NWSA Journal*, (2009).

8. Kearney, "Coalescing: The Development of Girls' Studies," 8.

9. Corrine T. Field, "Grand Old Women and Modern Girls: Generational and Racial Conflict in the US Women's Rights Movement, 1870–1920" (unpublished MS).

10. Berry Mayall, *Visionary Women and Visible Children, England 1900–1920: Childhood and the Women's Movement* (New York: Springer, 2017).

Building on the work of these scholars, and drawing on newspaper articles and archival sources such as diaries, interviews, letters, and memoirs from the Women's Library at the London School of Economics, this study argues that, though often forgotten and pushed aside, young girls were active participants in the woman's suffrage movement across the United States and United Kingdom. Although these young girls have been generally overlooked, this study identifies factors which led girls to become active in the movement and highlights youth suffrage groups formed by both adult suffragists and young people themselves. Further, this study addresses the varying reactions of the press and adult suffragists, and in doing so provides insight into the reasons why young girls have been forgotten in the movement.

## Schools and Suffragettes

Many young girls learned about the suffrage movement through their schools, teachers, and peers. In 1912, Winifred Starbuck and her classmates at an all-girls school in England "followed the suffragette movement with a good deal of excitement," decorating their desks with the Women's Social and Political Union colors, hanging pictures up of their favorite suffragette heroines, and "scanning the press anxiously" for any news about the movement. In general, their teachers kept quiet about their own involvement in the movement, though the girls knew that "the suffragettes were making a deep impression on some teachers" and that many had "thrown themselves into the movement with heart and soul." In March 1912, as the schoolgirls were scanning a list of arrests in the papers, they saw the name of their teacher, who had been arrested for throwing a brick in a window directly in front of a police officer and who had proceeded to go on a hunger strike in prison. The courage of their teacher inspired the girls and they began taking "a small part in the activities of the suffragettes, such as attending meetings, and distributing leaflets." Their teacher served not only as a role model for the girls but provided them with the space to learn about the movement and form understandings of justice and equality. By 1914, their school fired many of their teachers because of their participation in the movement and "it was clear that the teachers put in their place were not suffragettes." Thinking this was outrageous, the girls began to protest. They first persuaded their parents to sign a petition for the reinstatement of their teachers. When this amounted to nothing, they "began a term of disorder." Winifred Starbuck describes a "joyous anarchy" taking over the school. Soon

all of the schoolgirls refused to enter the building, taking the school bell and gong with them, "galloping about on the outskirts of the field," and pretended not to hear their teachers calling them in. Soon Starbuck and all the girls in her year were suspended and forbidden to enter the school grounds. Refusing to accept this, Starbuck walked straight into the building, "opened the side doors and windows to admit the others," and they all "broke up in style." Later, she and the other girls broke "into the school at night by a window one of the girls had left open" and wrote "Votes for Women" slogans all over the walls.<sup>11</sup> Winifred Starbuck and her classmates' experience reflects that the example and activism of a teacher could help students gain an understanding of concepts such as justice and equality, thereby giving the students space and courage to challenge the injustices and inequalities they began to see around them.

Other girls, such as Vera Brittain and Annabel Huth Jackson, were also inspired by their teachers and peers at school.<sup>12</sup> School became a place where girls could develop their individual identities and find peers who felt the same discontent, anger, and commitment to a common cause.<sup>13</sup> This was the case for fifteen-year-old Annabel Huth Jackson who was attending an all-girls' boarding school in Cheltenham, England. One of her classmates "smuggled in *The Story of an African Farm*" and after reading it, Jackson said that "the whole world seemed aflame and many of us became violent feminists."<sup>14</sup> Similarly, sixteen-year-old Vera Brittain's teacher at St. Monica's boarding school in Surrey, Miss Heath Jones, both "inspired and intimidated the girls," and was an "ardent though always discreet feminist."<sup>15</sup> Teachers could not openly discuss their involvement in suffrage activity to their students, but many, like Miss Jones, provided their students with information regardless. She provided Brittain with books on the women's movement and took her and several of the other girls to suffrage meetings. Brittain had suspicions that Miss Jones was "secretly in

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11. Winifred Starbuck, interview with Marjorie Anderson, "A Term of Disorder," BBC Radio Woman's Hour, 1958.

12. Born Claire Annabel Grant-Duff. She later married, changing her last name to Huth Jackson and chose to go by middle name Annabel. She used Annabel Huth Jackson as her pen name.

13. Carol Dyhouse, *Girls Growing up in Late Victorian and Edwardian England*. (Abington, UK: Routledge, 2012), 172.

14. Annabel Huth Jackson, *A Victorian Childhood*. (Abington, UK: Routledge, 2016), 160–61.

15. Vera Brittain, *Testament of Youth: An Autobiographical Study of the Years 1900–1925*. (London: Gollancz, 1933), 32.

sympathy with the militant suffrage raids and demonstrations.”<sup>16</sup> Brittain later described the profound influence that Miss Jones had on her interest and further action in the women’s movement.<sup>17</sup>

Similarly, Esther Knowles grew up “knowing all about the suffragettes.” She was a small child when she met future suffrage leader Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, who formed a girls club at her school in London. Several times, she walked from school to the gates of Holloway prison in order to greet the newly released suffragette prisoners. Even at her young age, she sold *Votes for Women* newspapers on the street. As Knowles reached her teenage years, Pethick-Lawrence asked her if she would like to become one of the office girls for the Women’s Social and Political Union, the leading militant suffrage organization in the country. She “jumped at the chance and gladly forgot all” about her other future plans and put her “heart and soul in the movement.” She even wished that she could go to prison with the other suffragettes. When the police raided the WSPU office in 1913, Knowles was not even sixteen. As her leaders were being arrested, she courageously hid the WSPU’s money under her dress so that the police could not confiscate it. She then returned to the front door and “confronted the constable standing outside and explained that [she] was a member of the WSPU staff.” When she later presented the money to her leaders, “a cheer went up and [she] was the heroine of the hour.”<sup>18</sup>

### “A Family Ordeal”: Like Mother, Like Daughter

Just as girls often became active in the movement through the influence of their teachers and peers, many also followed the examples of their suffragist family members. For example, Adela Pankhurst grew up in a prominent suffragist family. When she was eighteen, her mother Emmeline Pankhurst and older sisters—the leading suffragettes in the women’s movement in England—formed the Women’s Social and Political Union in their home.<sup>19</sup> From a young age, Pankhurst read “everything [she] could lay [her] hands on concerning social

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16. Brittain, *Testament of Youth*, 38.

17. Brittain, *Testament of Youth*, 39–41.

18. Grace Knowles, Autobiography, October 1972, TH830, 1, The Jill Craigie Archives, The Women’s Library, The London School of Economics.

19. Vera Coleman, *Adela Pankhurst: The Wayward Suffragette* (Melbourne: University Press, 2003) 33–34.

evils and a desire to begin [a] career as a crusader for social righteousness stirring in [her]."<sup>20</sup> Throughout her childhood, her home was a center of political life, and she would quietly listen and try not to be seen. She began publicly speaking for the movement at eighteen. Pankhurst went from being "a shy, somewhat melancholy girl" to a "self-confident woman who could hold crowds of thousands" before she was even nineteen.<sup>21</sup> In one particular speech, she was repeatedly hounded by an anti-suffragist man who said, "If you were my wife I'd give you a dose of poison." Pankhurst cheerfully replied, "No need of that my friend, if I were your wife I'd take it."<sup>22</sup> She would continue to give five to ten public speeches a week before she turned twenty.<sup>23</sup> While young girls typically had no space to express themselves in public life or politics, the woman's suffrage movement gave girls like Adela Pankhurst an opportunity to share their opinions when they otherwise may have kept silent.

Olive Bartels, a young girl from Ireland, remembered her mother going to London to speak at the House of Commons and protest for votes for women. Growing up, she watched as her mother would sell suffrage papers outside of the post office, and "admired her enormously." Inspired by her mother's example, she and her sister began chalking for the movement, drawing "Votes for Women" slogans on the streets. As Bartels went to school, she became more involved in the militant movement and lost all of her friends because of it. She described, "if you became militant you lost all of your friends. They would have nothing to do with you—terrible hostility—they just dropped you." The public, and even many suffragists, did not approve of militant action. An adult suffragette was one thing, but a young militant girl was a horrifying concept. Not being able to "make friends her own age," Bartels clung to the older women in the "very close knit" movement.<sup>24</sup>

Factory worker Elsie Flint also came in contact with the suffrage movement through her parents. Brought up by socialist parents, Flint was active in political life from a young age. Her parents had her attend a socialist Sunday school and it inspired her to study social issues such as woman's suffrage. She heard her

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20. Liddington, *Rebel Girls*, 560.

21. Liddington, *Rebel Girls*, 649.

22. Liddington, *Rebel Girls*, 648.

23. Coleman, *Adela Pankhurst*, 35.

24. Olive Bartels, Oral Interview, 27 March 1976, Box 1, Disc 17, Oral Evidence of the Suffragette and Suffragist Movements: The Brian Harrison Interviews, The Women's Library, The London School of Economics.

parents always "talking about how women should have the vote and that sort of thing." Woman's suffrage was often tied to socialism. Many prominent suffragettes were also socialists, such as Sylvia Pankhurst. At sixteen, Flint protested for better working conditions alongside Sylvia Pankhurst. Elsie Flint and her mother and sisters would go to meetings together each week and felt like they "were going to move mountains."<sup>25</sup>

Another young girl, nine-year-old Bessie Watson, used her skills to push the woman's movement forward alongside her mother. Watson joined the WSPU with her mother in Scotland. She described walking with her mother and stopping to look at the window of the WSPU office. Watson described, "When we came out, my mother and I were members of the WSPU and I was booked to play in the Historical Pageant." Bessie Watson was a skilled bagpiper and the WSPU recognized that her talent could promote votes for women. At her first suffrage pageant she "wore a white dress with a purple, white, and green sash bearing the words 'Votes for Women.'" She was later invited to travel to London to play in a women's march when she was ten years old. She would frequently "race home from school" and play her bagpipes outside of the Calton Jail in Edinburgh for the suffragette prisoners. Throughout "this most exciting time of [her] life," she "followed the newspapers and attended meetings with [her] mother."<sup>26</sup>

Nellie Hall's parents helped found the Women's Social and Political Union, alongside the Pankhursts. Their involvement profoundly influenced her participation in woman's suffrage. Hall explained, "Considering my family history, it is really not surprising that I have always been prepared to make a stand when I am deeply concerned about matters. It was inevitable that I should become closely connected with the women's movement."<sup>27</sup> Both of her parents were active suffragists, and growing up she watched as her parents were repeatedly arrested for the cause. At fourteen, Nellie Hall walked home from school every day to the prison and sang freedom songs for the suffragette prisoners, all the while having rotten vegetables and eggs thrown at her by anti-suffragists. At

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25. Elsie Flint, Oral Interview, 19 December 1974, Box 1, Disc 7, Oral Evidence of the Suffragette and Suffragist Movements: The Brian Harrison Interviews, The Women's Library, The London School of Economics.

26. "The Lone Piper: Elizabeth Somerville Autobiography" *The Piping Times*, 1998.

27. Nellie Hall, "A Personal Experience: the Beginnings of Women's Liberation", n.d., 7JCC/01/03, The Jill Craigie Archives, The Women's Library, The London School of Economics.

sixteen, she was first arrested herself for trying to send a press telegram about a suffrage meeting that her father was holding. Hall's younger sister Emmeline was also involved in the movement, and at times the entire family was arrested together. When Hall was nineteen, she was in charge of disrupting a dinner that the prime minister was to be attending. She set off the fire alarm, making it impossible for him to enter the building. She then threw a brick through the window of his car, and "Immediately [she] was surrounded by a crowd of policemen who hauled [her] through a long line of onlookers, all of whom contributed their opinion of [her] as [she] passed."<sup>28</sup> While in prison, she was force fed 137 times.<sup>29</sup> She vowed that while held there, "more militancy would take place and more houses would burn."<sup>30</sup> During the court sentencing, her "mouth was very much cut, clothes badly torn and hands swollen and bruised and [she] made a magnificent effort to stop the proceedings."<sup>31</sup> Even though she "scarcely had the strength to sit upright, one felt she was stronger than any other human being in that court. By sheer force of spirituality she conquered and dominated the scene."<sup>32</sup> As she was being dragged out, she shouted, "It doesn't matter, we shall go on fighting, fighting, fighting."<sup>33</sup>

Elsie Duval also grew up in a family of passionate suffragists. She became a suffragist herself at the age of fifteen. Her parents thought she was too young at the time to become involved in militant action, but by nineteen she threw herself into the militant movement. In 1911, police arrested her for breaking a window and sentenced to one month in prison, where she went on hunger strike and was force fed over nine "excruciatingly painful" times.<sup>34</sup> Duval describes refusing food, and clinging to the framework of her bed as they tried to force a tube down her throat.<sup>35</sup> Despite the ordeal of the treatment, she wrote, "To win we must be prepared to fight and suffer. There are clouds gathering and it will not be long before another storm will burst forth." Her actions were in part due

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28. Hall, "A Personal Experience: the Beginnings of Women's Liberation."

29. Hall, "A Personal Experience: the Beginnings of Women's Liberation."

30. *The Times*, 9 June 1914, pg. 4.

31. "Terrible Scenes in Court" *The Suffragette*, 5 June 1914.

32. "Miss Nellie Hall at the Old Bailey" *The Suffragette*, 3 July 1914.

33. *The Times*, 3 June 1914, pg. 3.

34. Elsie Duval, "Local Suffragists' Prison Experiences," 11 October 1912, 7HFD/D/33, Papers of Hugh Franklin and Elsie Duval, The Women's Library, The London School of Economics.

35. Duval, "Local Suffragists' Prison Experiences."

to her protesting her own mother's imprisonment and force feedings.<sup>36</sup> While she was in prison both her mother and sisters were in prison as well. Fighting for votes for women was a family ordeal.<sup>37</sup>

### **"Baby Suffragettes": Attitudes towards Young Girls in the Movement**

The press often ran stories on girls in the woman's suffrage movement, both criticizing them and marvelling at their young ages. News reporters called Elsie Duval's accountability and sanity into question because of her age and involvement in the movement. One newspaper related an account of a magistrate who had Duval examined by a doctor because he could not believe that a young girl would get involved in the militant suffrage movement unless she was mentally insane or coerced into joining by controlling adults. He said to Duval, "I did not think you were responsible for your actions . . . the doctor says you are apparently quite sane but he goes on to say that by reason of your youth you are apt to be led away and excited by other unscrupulous and hysterical persons." She countered this, saying, "I was excited by absolutely no-one. What I did was entirely on my own." She proceeded to say that she was not sorry for what she had done. The magistrate then called her a "silly little girl" who couldn't influence anybody, much less a government.<sup>38</sup>

Newspapers across the United Kingdom documented and critiqued the age and accountability of another young girl, sixteen-year-old Dora Thewlis, a factory girl from Huddersfield, who stormed the House of Commons in 1907 with a procession of suffragettes. Dozens of newspapers detailed the event and her arrest, labelling her the "baby suffragette."<sup>39</sup> Headlines highlighted her youth, calling her "the little suffragette," "the girl suffragette," "the child suffragette," and "little Dora."<sup>40</sup> These headlines were so intriguing to the public that Dora's

36. "Local Suffragette Smashes Windows," 7 July 1912, 7HFD/D/33, Papers of Hugh Franklin and Elsie Duval, The Women's Library, The London School of Economics.

37. Due to complications of being force fed in prison, Elsie died at the young age of twenty-six, only two years after marrying fellow suffragette Hugh Franklin.

38. "Local Suffragette Smashes Windows," 7HFD/D/33, Papers of Hugh Franklin and Elsie Duval, The Women's Library, The London School of Economics, 7 July 1912.

39. "The Baby Suffragette" *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 28 March 1907; "Baby Suffragette" *The Leeds Mercury*, 27 March 1907.

40. "The Little Suffragette," *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 26 March 1907.; "Huddersfield Girl Suffragette," *The Shipley Times and Express*, 29 March 1907; "Child Suffragette Released," *The*

story quickly became popular and appeared in over twenty-five newspapers in the space of a few days.<sup>41</sup>

The magistrate over Dora Thewlis's case, Horace Smith, was "shocked" by her age.<sup>42</sup> He asked, "Who let you escape from Huddersfield?"<sup>43</sup> He told her, "You are only a child. You ought to be in school. Will you go home again? Here is a young girl of sixteen enticed from her home in Yorkshire and let loose in the streets of London. I think it was perfectly disgraceful and the circumstances reflect the gravest discredit on all concerned bringing you up to London."<sup>44</sup> In response, her parents wrote to the magistrate, saying,

We find ourselves in agreement with his Honour when he says that girls of sixteen ought to be at school. But we respectfully remind his Honour that girls of Dora's age in her station of life are . . . compelled in their thousands to spend ten hours per day in health-destroying factories . . . sanctioned by law, in the making of which women have no voice. What wonder is it if Dora should have turned a rebel and joined hands with the dauntless women who risk their life and liberty in the hope that thereby justice may the sooner be conceded to their sex.<sup>45</sup>

One newspaper ridiculed this letter sent by Thewlis's parents, calling it "artificial" and in the "style of the cheapest melodrama."<sup>46</sup> However, the letter reflects additional motivation for Thewlis wanting to join the movement. Life as a mill girl, subject to awful working conditions, could have lead her to want to have a voice in changing laws regarding working conditions. As her parents wrote, it was inevitable that "Dora should have turned rebel . . . that thereby justice may be sooner conceded."<sup>47</sup> During her time in prison, her mother wrote her saying, "Dear child—I am very proud of the way you have acted, so keep your spirits up and be cheerful . . . You know what you went to London for, and what you are doing. You are a member of the Women's



Figure 2.  
Dora  
Thewlis.  
21 March  
1907. The  
Daily Mir-  
ror. Cap-  
tion under  
picture read:  
"One of the  
attacking  
party strug-  
gling in  
the grasp of  
two burly  
constables."

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*Daily Mail*, 28 March 1907.

41. "The Little Suffragettes"; "Huddersfield Girl Suffragette"; "Child Suffragette Released."

42. "The Girl Suffragette," *Hull Daily Mail*, 25 March 1907.

43. "Suffragists at Court," *The Christchurch Times*, 30 March 1907.

44. *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 28 March 1907.

45. *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 28 March 1907.

46. "The Surrender of Dora," *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 28 March 1907.

47. *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 28 March 1907.

Social and Political Union, who are looking after you, so do your duty to the WSPU."<sup>48</sup> As her mother's letter illustrates, Dora was regarded as a full member of the movement rather than simply a pawn in the hands of adult suffragettes.

Many newspapers portrayed Dora Thewlis as a child incapable of thinking for herself. "You couldn't put a suffragette's head on a girl's shoulders," they argued.<sup>49</sup> The *Dublin Evening Mail* called her "poor little Dora," a "simple minded little factory girl," a "pawn in the hands of women who should have known better . . . who couldn't care a tuppenny ticket about the franchise; she would probably prefer to interest herself in a doll."<sup>50</sup> Thewlis did not want to be a suffragette, they argued, but she was manipulated by the leaders of the woman's suffrage movement: "Dora was never really a suffragette at heart. She was a suffragette by temptation."<sup>51</sup> It seemed unfathomable to the press that a girl of sixteen could think rationally and of her own volition. Instead, she must have been coerced. They painted the women's suffrage leaders as villains who exploited "a terror stricken child to gain a move in the political game."<sup>52</sup> Many newspapers put the blame fully on the adult suffragists, arguing that Thewlis was "not to be blamed. It is those who have filled her young mind with the 'emancipation of women' that bear the responsibility."<sup>53</sup> It was a "mistake of The Women's Social and Political Union" they argued, for "allowing a girl as young as sixteen to take so prominent a part in the campaign for votes for women."<sup>54</sup> These newspaper portrayed girls like Thewlis as infants with no coherent thought or individuality yet they expected them at this age to be fully eligible for marriage or to work tireless hours in factories. Maturity then, in their eyes, lay not in age or individuality, but in a submissive and dutiful nature.

Using Thewlis as an example, many newspapers questioned the use of young girls in the movement. The *Yorkshire Evening Post* argued that, "It is a cruel and barbarous thing that these women suffragists are doing in recruiting young girls in their ranks." They continued, "To expect that their cause is to be advanced by obtaining the support of minors is too grotesque for consideration. The experience of Dora is a lesson to other young girls of adventurous spirit, who might

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48. *The Daily Mail*, 27 March 1907.

49. "Back to Mamma," *Dublin Evening Mail*, 29 March 1907.

50. "Back to Mamma."

51. "Back to Mamma."

52. "Back to Mamma."

53. "Back to Mamma."

54. "The Yorkshire Girl Suffragist" *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 27 March 1907.

be tempted to indulge in similar exploits." They concluded, "In any case it is to be hoped they will not again have young girls amongst them . . . it is hardly possible to take such a youthful enthusiast seriously."<sup>55</sup> By painting Thewlis as a manipulated child forced into the movement against her will, the press perpetuated the stereotypical views of young girls at the time as being mere objects, incapable of individual thought or action.

The *Hull Daily Mail* countered this idea, displaying Thewlis as a capable young woman, saying, "Dora is not so much a wayward child as a purposeful young woman earning a good income, and acting with the distinct approval of her natural guardians . . . Dora feels that she has just as much right to sacrifice herself for her beliefs."<sup>56</sup> Thewlis's mother, herself an ardent suffragette, reaffirmed this, saying, "She thoroughly understands the cause for which she is suffering. Ever since she was seven she was a diligent reader of the newspapers and can hold her own in a debate on politics."<sup>57</sup> "[Dora] may be a child in years," she insisted, "but she is not in sense or determination."<sup>58</sup> More importantly, Thewlis herself reject the notions that she was manipulated or forced, saying, "I am quite capable. I understand what I am fighting for, and prepared to go to prison for the cause. I feel that women ought to have their rights, and it will be an honour to go to prison."<sup>59</sup> "I came to London last week with the full consent of my parents, who, of course, know what my object is. My mother could not come, and as I thought the family should be represented, I decided to come myself. I am old enough to take care of myself."<sup>60</sup> Thewlis fought back against the claims and assumptions that she was a child or "baby suffragette" who was unable to think or act for herself.

After Dora Thewlis challenged the press's claims that she was only a child, newspapers took another tactic. Many newspapers tried to portray Thewlis as no longer interested in woman's suffrage after her arrest. The *Daily Mail* painted as "a pathetic little figure . . . with a tear stained face . . . and a very repentant demonstrator now who has changed her views entirely and now resents the suffragette movement."<sup>61</sup> They claimed that she said, "I have had enough of prison . . .

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55. *The Daily Telegraph*, 6 April 1907.

56. *Hull Daily Mail*, 25 March 1907.

57. *Hull Daily Mail*.

58. "The Future of Dora Thewlis," *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 28 March 1907.

59. *Hull Daily Mail*, 25 March 1907.

60. *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 26 March 1907.

61. "Child Suffragette Released," *The Daily Mail*, 28 March 1907.

I am ashamed of myself.”<sup>62</sup> Countering this however, after returning home from prison, Thewlis said that “However, after returning home from prison, Thewlis said that she “had not carried her fight far enough and was ready to go back to London.”<sup>63</sup> She continued, “I am determined to go back to London and fight until women get their votes. I am not a baby.”<sup>64</sup> Thewlis resented and challenged the label given to her of “baby suffragette.” She requested, “Don’t call me baby suffragette. I am not a baby really.”<sup>65</sup> In prison they tried to “ridicule [her] as a ‘baby’ or ‘child.’ The taunts that [she] was a child made [her] see the futility of continuing the agitation at present, so [she] gave in, but wrote “mark my words . . . I shall continue to fight as long as I can.”<sup>66</sup> Dora’s experience in London was perhaps one of the most publicized and criticized experiences of young suffragettes. The press used her as an example and warning against young girls joining the movement. However, young girls across the Atlantic continued to join and fight in the woman’s movement despite criticism and opposition.

The press also labelled Dorothy Fooks, a sixteen-year-old from Bayonne, New Jersey, as a “baby suffragette.”<sup>67</sup> One newspaper described her as “an infant phenomenon.”<sup>68</sup> She was “hailed as the youngest campaigner for women’s suffrage in the United States.”<sup>69</sup> Fooks became involved in the woman’s suffrage movement at the age of eleven, speaking before large street audiences.<sup>70</sup> When she first joined the movement, “her family opposed the campaign for women’s votes, but [then] she converted them irrevocably to the cause.”<sup>71</sup> At the age of fifteen, Fooks was president of the Equal Justice League for Young Women in Bayonne.<sup>72</sup> She enlisted “one hundred school children in her cause as fighters for equal suffrage.”<sup>73</sup> She “conducted a single handed crusade” to

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62. “Miss Dora Thewlis,” *Leeds Mercury*, 27 March 1907.

63. “Treated Unfairly,” *The Leeds Mercury*, 29 March 1907.

64. “The Future of Dora Thewlis,” *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 28 March 1907.

65. “Treated Unfairly,” *The Leeds Mercury*, 29 March 1907.

66. “The Future of Dora Thewlis,” *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 28 March 1907.

67. “Baby Suffragette Declares She Will Become First Woman President of United States,” *The Guthrie Daily Leader*, 20 March 1912.

68. “Mrs. Ruhlin’s Fight Not So Very Awful,” *The New York Times*, 28 October 1911.

69. “She Talks for Votes at 15,” *Jeffersonville Daily Reflector*, 30 March 1911.

70. “She Talks for Votes at 15”; Dorothy Fooks, *Lady Lawyer* (New York: R. Speller, 1975), ii.

71. “She Wants to Be President,” *Perth Amboy Evening News*, 18 March 1912.

72. Ida Husted Harper, *History of Woman Suffrage*, vol. 6:1900–1920 (New York: National American Woman Suffrage Association, 1922), 419.

73. “Schoolgirl Candidate for President in City,” *The Washington Herald*, 28 July 1910.

turn her fellow students into suffragettes and believed she finally "won them over."<sup>74</sup> One newspaper called her "the little suffragette with big aspirations," as she declared that her plans were to become a "lawyer, then a judge, after that a United States senator, and then . . . the first woman president of the United States."<sup>75</sup> Later Fooks would go on to achieve many of these goals while still a young adult. Before she was even twenty-five, she became a lawyer and the first woman attorney admitted to the Supreme Court bar, served in the navy, published several books, and ran for Congress and for mayor of New York City.<sup>76</sup>

Dorothy Fooks was a very eloquent speaker at her young age. "She's got fine delivery, that girl has," an onlooker at one of her speeches described, "She's not like those old maids that come down here . . . you see, they listened to her because she was interesting."<sup>77</sup> One newspaper characterized her as "one of the best of the suffragist orators . . . making ringing campaign addresses every night in New York City."<sup>78</sup> Another newspaper called her the "best known of the suffragist orators" despite her being relatively forgotten in the history of the suffrage movement.<sup>79</sup> At fourteen, Fooks herself said, "I have several times spoken in public and I believe I have converted over two thousand persons."<sup>80</sup> She spoke with logic and rhetoric, saying, "You all know about the sinking of the Titanic. That great ship was the pride of the sea, and was believed to be unsinkable. But she went down. Why? Because she did not have all the modern improvements. Even so, our great



Figure 3. Dorothy Fooks, fifteen years old, in "Miss Dorothy Fooks Champion Orator," *The Detroit Times*, 8 November 1910.

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74. "School Girl a Suffragette," *The Guthrie Daily Leader*, 24 December 1909.

75. "Baby Suffragette Declares She Will Become First Woman President of United States," *The Guthrie Daily Leader*, 20 March 1912.

76. *The Morning Tulsa Daily World*, 30 April 1922; *Evening Star*, 18 July 1937; *The Sun and New York Daily Herald*, 5 September 1920.

77. "Girl Speaks Sans Riot," *The New York Tribune*, 18 April 1912.

78. "Miss Dorothy Fooks, Campaign Orator," *The Spokane Press*, 8 November 1910.

79. "Miss Dorothy Fooks The Great Champion Orator," *The Detroit Times*, 8 November 1910.

80. "School Girl a Suffragette," *The Guthrie Daily Leader*, 24 December 1909.

country will go down if you don't have all the people progress together. Who are the people? Not men alone. The men are only half the people."<sup>81</sup> Fooks also understood the importance of her age in relation to her activism. At one speech, an older man who was an advocate for woman's rights accompanied her. Fooks announced to the crowd, "Ladies and Gentleman, no doubt you can see by these white hairs that it is not only the young who are working for woman's rights . . . He is old and I am only a schoolgirl. We are symbolic of the world's attitude toward the movement."<sup>82</sup>

### Youth and Maturity: Reactions of Older Suffragists

Not all suffragists wanted to associate themselves with young girls in the movement. The suffragist Helen Taylor argued that if women associated themselves with youth, men would see them as immature and incapable of thinking politically. She said, "For with whom do we share those disqualifications? With criminals, with idiots, with lunatics, and lastly with minors—young people whose minds have not arrived at maturity. [Men] will always feel that if women are classed, for political purposes, along with the childish, the wicked, the mentally incapable, it must be because there is some resemblance between them."<sup>83</sup> Like the many aforementioned newspapers, even some suffragists, such as Helen Taylor, connected youth with the idea of insanity and incapability. Dr. Corrine Field suggests that age was a strategy women used to push for women's rights. She wrote, "Woman's rights activists were particularly concerned with using chronological age to define a clear transition between girlish dependence and womanly independence."<sup>84</sup> Lavena Saltonstall, an adult suffragette, detailed the antagonism towards young girls becoming involved in women's suffrage. She wrote,

Should any girl show a tendency to politics, or to ideas of her own, she is looked upon by the majority of women as a person who neglects doorsteps and home matters, and is therefore not fit to associate with their respectable

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81. "Girl Speaks Sans Riot," *The New York Tribune*, 18 April 1912.

82. "Girl Speaks Sans Riot."

83. Helen Taylor (1870), "Women's Suffrage 3," in *Sexual Equality: Writing by John Stuart Mill, Harriet Taylor Mill, and Helen Taylor*, eds. Ann P. Robson and John M. Robson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994) 280–81.

84. Corrine T. Field, "Are Women . . . All Minors? Woman's Rights and the Politics of Aging in the Antebellum United States," *Journal of Women's History* 12, no. 4 (2001): 120.

daughters and sisters. If girls develop any craving for a different life or wider ideas, their mothers fear that they are going to become Socialists or Suffragettes . . . Who is going to tell these mothers that daughters were not given to them merely to dress and domesticate? Who is going to tell them that it is as cruel to discourage a child from making use of its own talent or individuality as it would be to discourage a child from using its limbs?<sup>85</sup>

Even though girls were not always seen as intelligent or mature enough to be participating in the women's movement, some girls fought back against this idea. For example, at a dinner party, sixteen-year-old Vera Brittain felt too young and inexperienced at first to join in on a discussion of women's rights, even though she was already decidedly a feminist and suffragist. She described one adult woman's attitude towards her saying, "[She] always seems to try and make me feel my own inexperience and youth and she sometimes succeeds but she didn't tonight. I believe I have advanced too far now to lose a certain amount of faith in myself; young and inexperienced as I am, I have thought and studied." Then, commenting on the attitude towards youth and maturity, she wrote, "I wonder if one of the consolations of increasing years is to try and crush the youth that they have lost and belittle it in the light of their advanced experiences and ideas. But history itself often proves the youth in the right."<sup>86</sup>

Other girls felt inadequate because of their youth. When Norah Balls, a girl suffragette from Northern England, and other young girls in the movement would go to meetings, they would put their hair up to try "to look a little older and look a little more dependable and reasonable."<sup>87</sup> Similarly, suffragette Grace Roe said, "I suffered very much from looking too young and I used to think if only I were thirty they'd listen to me. But they didn't." Instead, Roe wrote for the movement because when people read her arguments they "thought [she] was much older."<sup>88</sup> Likewise, Katherine Milhous, an "ardent girl suffragist" from Pitman, New Jersey who had been a suffragist "ever since she was born," felt that because of her age she could not "talk with any force."

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85. "The Letters of a Tailoress," *Highway* 3, February 1911.

86. Vera Brittain, *Chronicle of Youth: War Diary, 1913-17*. (London: Gollancz, 1981), 54.

87. Norah Balls, Oral Interview, 16 April 1977, Box 1, Disc 31, Oral Evidence of the Suffragette and Suffragist Movements: The Brian Harrison Interviews, The Women's Library, The London School of Economics.

88. Grace Roe, Oral Interview, 4 October 1974, Box 1, Disc 3, Oral Evidence of the Suffragette and Suffragist Movements: The Brian Harrison Interviews, The Women's Library, The London School of Economics.

However, she said, "I decided to draw what I thought, and hope that that would have some weight." Many prominent newspapers published Millhous's sketches and comics about equal suffrage.<sup>89</sup>

## Youth Suffrage Groups

While some adult suffragists saw young girls as immature and incapable, others actively advocated for them to become involved in the movement. In 1914, Sylvia Pankhurst formed the Junior Suffragettes, an organization aimed at encouraging young girls between the ages of fourteen and eighteen to become suffragettes.<sup>90</sup> The group held speeches, debates, concerts, and parades.<sup>91</sup> One young member of the Junior Suffragettes, Rose Pengally, a fourteen-year-old factory worker, was so inspired by her fellow young suffragettes that she led a strike at her work, marching her other young coworkers out and leading them to the Women's Hall where the Junior Suffragettes met each week. Her coworkers nicknamed her "Sylvia" after Sylvia Pankhurst, and many of the factory girls said that Pengally inspired them to become enthusiastic about votes for women.<sup>92</sup>

While the Junior Suffragettes group was formed by adults wanting to inspire young girls, other suffrage groups developed that were formed by the youth themselves. One of these groups was the Young Purple, White, and Green Club. The name was representative of the main WSPU colors: purple, white, and green. The group featured both young girls and boys, with members such as Rachel Ferguson, Irene and Janet McLeod, Hugh Franklin (later the husband of girl suffragette Elsie Duval), Stefan Moxon, and Gwenda Rowe, among many others.<sup>93</sup> Their main aim was writing and performing suffrage plays that addressed issues such as the plight of working women and challenged societal gender roles.<sup>94</sup> One newspaper described, "This newly formed club . . . proved

89. "Girl Suffragist Makes Clever Sketches," *Evening Public Ledger*, 1 April 1915.

90. *The Women's Dreadnought*, 2 January 1915.

91. *The Women's Dreadnought*, 4 July 1915.

92. E. Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement—An Intimate Account of Persons and Ideals* (London: Virago Limited, 1977), 542–43.

93. "Letter to Hugh Franklin," 7FHD/A/2, The Women's Library, London School of Economics. Other members include Roma Ferguson, Helen Fraser, Norah Trowell, Helen Reinold, Ruth Lowry, Gladys Larad, Iris Rowe, Winifred Walker, Jessie Bartlett, and Margaret Douglas.

94. "The Young Purple White and Green Club," *Votes for Women*, 13 May 1910.

that the rising generation of suffragettes has not started out to reform the world without a sense of humour."<sup>95</sup> While little information is known about each of the members, it is clear that as a whole they were in favor of militant action as they sent letters of congratulations to each of their members who underwent prison sentences for militant activity.<sup>96</sup>

Another of these groups formed by and for young suffragettes was the Young Hot Bloods. The Young Hot Bloods, or YHB, was likely formed by the young Jessie Kenney and Adela Pankhurst in 1907.<sup>97</sup> The Junior Suffragettes group may have featured concerts and parades, but the YHB was a secret, militant, internal organization within the WSPU. Their aim was to "form a nucleus of young suffragists willing to support the WSPU in militant action."<sup>98</sup> Married women or women over the age of thirty were not permitted to join.<sup>99</sup> Women who joined had to make a pledge that they were prepared to perform any militant action and that they would never divulge the meaning of the letters YHB.<sup>100</sup> These women, "most of them young, toiled through the night across



Figure 4. Junior Suffragettes Club in Victoria Park, Norah Smyth. 1914. Photo provided by the East London Suffragette Festival.

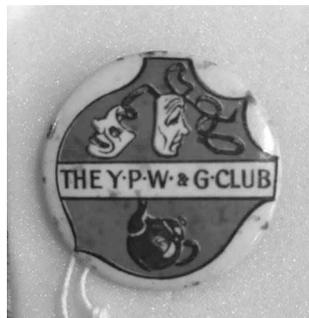


Figure 5. Button for the Young Purple, White, and Green Club, 7HFD/D/10, The Women's Library, London School of Economics.

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95. "The Young Purple White and Green Club."

96. "Letter to Hugh Franklin," 7FHD/A/2, The Women's Library, London School of Economics.

97. Fern Riddell, *Death in Ten Minutes: the Forgotten Life of Radical Suffragette Kitty Marion*. (London: Hodder and Stroughton, 2018), 160; "Active Rebellion," *Nottingham Evening Post*, 8 May 1913; "Young Hot Bloods," *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 9 May 1913.

98. "Secret Suffrage Band," *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, 9 May 1913.

99. "Young Hot Bloods," *Leicester Daily Post*, 9 May 1913; "Secret Suffrage Band," *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, 9 May 1913.

100. "Secret Suffrage Band," *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, 9 May 1913.

unfamiliar country, carrying heavy cases of petrol and paraffin."<sup>101</sup> Newspapers reported them as terrorists.<sup>102</sup> The name developed after a newspaper wrote, "Mrs. Pankhurst will, of course, be followed blindly by a number of the younger and more hot-blooded members of the Union."<sup>103</sup> One newspaper characterized them, saying,

Some of the younger members of the Women's Social and Political Union are still more difficult to deal with . . . Curiously enough, these young hot bloods are not the women who would get a vote . . . they own no property, and are not married women . . . none of them are likely to get the vote, and personally, I am convinced that they don't care about it. What they want is the excitement and morbid satisfaction of doing something wrong.<sup>104</sup>

Militancy was seriously looked down upon by the public, and when performed by young suffragettes, such as the Young Hot Bloods, it was a sign of immaturity as well—just young girls looking for "excitement and morbid satisfaction."<sup>105</sup>

## Girls Joining the Movement Independently

Some girls joined the suffrage movement on their own. One such girl was Vera Wentworth, a member of the Young Hot Bloods.<sup>106</sup> Before joining the YHB, Wentworth became a suffragette in 1906 at the age of seventeen. She "became one of the most militant suffragettes," and at eighteen she was sentenced to six weeks in prison but had to serve an extra day because she scratched "Votes for Women" onto her cell wall, a penalty she described as "well worth the extra day. They will never get it out. . . . I believe that inscription will stand as a lasting memorial of our work today."<sup>107</sup> She always tried to make her fellow suffragette prisoners laugh, "playing 'Votes for Women' tunes on [her] comb."<sup>108</sup> Police arrested her again that same year, and she served a three month sentence this

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101. Pankhurst, *Suffragette Movement*, 446–47.

102. "A Smashed Conspiracy," *Illustrated Police News*, 10 July 1913.

103. *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 8 May 1913.

104. "Young Hot Bloods," *Sheffield Evening Telegraph*, 16 May 1913.

105. "Young Hot Bloods."

106. Vera Wentworth was born with the name Jessie Spinks. She changed her name 1907 when she became a full-time suffragette.

107. "Jokes in Holloway Gaol," *The Daily Telegraph*, 20 March 1908.

108. "Jokes in Holloway Gael."

time around.<sup>109</sup> The next year, while she was nineteen, she was arrested four times, went on hunger strike, and was force fed many times.<sup>110</sup> During this sentence, she was put in a pitch black room of solitary confinement for singing suffragette songs as well as handcuffed to her bed when she broke through her cell windows after hearing the screams of her fellow suffragettes being force fed.<sup>111</sup>

Similarly, Jessie Stephen joined the movement on her own in 1910 when she was sixteen-years-old in Glasgow, Scotland, and was the youngest member of the delegation there.<sup>112</sup> She sold *Votes for Women* papers on the street: "I used to be a great salesman, shouting 'Votes for Women.' Being so young, I had more people coming up to buy the paper than if I'd been older." She traveled to London that year to lobby for votes, with women who "were twice and three times [her] age." As she and crowds of women "were marching peaceably across Westminster bridge some men came out and broke up [their] demonstration." "They tore my hat off my hair," she related, "pulling out my hair by the handful and tore my coat. And the police were there mind you and they didn't do a thing to stop it."<sup>113</sup> Early on she became involved in militant activity. She dropped acid bombs into pillar boxes across Glasgow: "It was organized in a military precision," she described, "we were all handed the box of acid or whatever and we were told the exact time that we had to drop it in. And we covered the whole city of Glasgow. And nobody was ever caught."<sup>114</sup> Inspired by her work in the suffrage movement, Jessie Stephen formed the Domestic Workers' Union in Glasgow when she was seventeen. She spoke to crowds of two hundred girls, inspiring them to stand up for better working conditions as domestic laborers.<sup>115</sup>



Figure 6. Vera Wentworth wearing an apron to advertise a WSPU London Procession, June 21, 1908, Women's Library, London School of Economics.

109. "The Militant Demonstrations," *Votes for Women*, 2 July 1908.

110. "Release of the Bristol Prisoners," *Votes for Women*, 3 December 1909.

111. "Release of the Bristol Prisoners."

112. Jessie Stephen, Oral Interview, 1 July 1977, Box 1, Disc 32, Oral Evidence of the Suffragette and Suffragist Movements: The Brian Harrison Interviews, The Women's Library, The London School of Economics.

113. Stephen, Oral Interview.

114. Stephen, Oral Interview.

115. Stephen, Oral Interview.

Sixteen-year-old Rebecca Hourwich from Washington D.C. joined the women's suffrage movement after reading the news. She wrote, "When I read in the papers that the Women's Party was aiming to give women freedom, and were going to have a suffrage parade in Washington, here was a group that would have many brave, wonderful women whom I wanted to meet."<sup>116</sup> Acting on what she read, she "went downtown to the Woman's Party Headquarters and simply said, 'I would like to be a volunteer to help in the parade.' I don't know what they thought but they immediately arranged for me to do what a little errand girl would do."<sup>117</sup> She participated in the 1913 Women's March on Washington after the inauguration of Woodrow Wilson. She described the riotous crowds, with men on the street shouting "insulting and obscene" things. Men tried to lift her skirt and she felt that they "wanted to do injury to the women who were parading on foot."<sup>118</sup> Throughout her teenage years, she worked with the woman's suffrage organizations and older women "got a lot of work out of [her] for nothing."<sup>119</sup> She attended "all the meetings like an eager, young beaver. I sat in on very important key meetings with a group of older, dedicated women."<sup>120</sup> She met Alice Paul, a prominent suffragist in the US, and worried that Miss Paul saw her "just as a little softy and needed toughening up."<sup>121</sup> For Hourwich, "Campaigning for suffrage had become [her] full-time program. Sixteen hours a day, seven days a week." She was a "seasoned campaigner" before she was eighteen.<sup>122</sup> She continued working for woman's rights throughout her life. She traveled and lived throughout the world as a journalist, writing many books about international women's rights, particularly African women's rights.<sup>123</sup>



Figure 7. Rebecca Hourwich, sixteen-years-old, National Woman's Party Records, 1913.

116. Rebecca Hourwich Reyher, *Search and Struggle for Equality and Independence* (Berkeley: University of California, 1977), 56.

117. Reyher, *Search and Struggle for Equality and Independence*.

118. Reyher, *Search and Struggle for Equality and Independence*, 57.

119. Reyher, *Search and Struggle for Equality and Independence*, 59.

120. Reyher, *Search and Struggle for Equality and Independence*, 60.

121. Reyher, *Search and Struggle for Equality and Independence*, 76.

122. Reyher, *Search and Struggle for Equality and Independence*.

123. Reyher, *Search and Struggle for Equality and Independence*.

## Conclusion

Many young girls still remain forgotten or unnamed in the history of the woman's suffrage movement. Some girls received brief recognition in news articles, but little other information remains. Police arrested Alice Noble, a sixteen-year-old girl from Leeds, England, for storming Parliament in 1907 with Dora Thewlis.<sup>124</sup> Despite their similar ages, Alice was pushed aside and forgotten while Dora was labelled the "baby suffragette" and plastered all over the papers. Similarly, seventeen-year-old Anne Evelyn Armstrong from Blackpool, England was arrested along with Dora and Alice when storming Parliament, yet she was only mentioned once in the newspapers.<sup>125</sup> Other young girls show up in photographs campaigning for women's rights, yet they remain unnamed.

The young suffragettes found in this study add to the understanding of girls as significant historical actors who meaningfully contributed to the woman's suffrage movement. Rather than simply assisting on the sidelines, girls actively took the initiative to join the woman's suffrage movement, give speeches, form suffrage clubs, perform militant action, and go to prison. These girls were not just supporting characters in the story of the woman's suffrage movement, but were active, passionate participants.



Figure 8. "Three Girls Holding Placards advertising Votes for Women" TWL.2002.592, The Women's Library, London School of Economics.

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*McKenzi Christensen is a senior at Brigham Young University studying history teaching and minoring in global women's studies and English teaching. McKenzie's passion for women's history, mixed with her capstone theme of the history of childhood and youth, led her to discover forgotten young suffragettes in both the United Kingdom and the United States. McKenzie was able to travel to archives in London, Boston, and New York to complete this research. McKenzie is currently continuing this research for her women's studies capstone and hopes to continue finding as many "baby suffragettes" as she can to make their stories known.*

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124. "Leeds Suffragettes Passionate Protest," *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 15 February 1907.

125. *Manchester Courier*, 28 March 1907.