

*Winning the Vote: The Triumph of the American Woman Suffrage Movement*, by Robert P. J. Cooney Jr., in collaboration with the National Women's History Project. Santa Cruz, CA: American Graphic Press, 2005. xv, 496 pp. 960 photographs, illustrations, bibliography, index. \$85.00 cloth.

Reviewer Kathleen M. Green is professor of history at Morningside College. Her research and writing have focused on woman suffrage, temperance and prohibition, and Sioux City.

*Winning the Vote: The Triumph of the American Woman Suffrage Movement* is a photographic and documentary history of an often overlooked movement in American history. This visually pleasing work is a balanced account of the seven-decade campaign on the local, state, and national level to secure the right to vote for American women. Robert Cooney, through his extensive research in archival sources, tells the story of four generations of American women who worked tirelessly to empower American women to exercise their most basic civil right.

The volume is arranged chronologically in 18 chapters that cover the years from 1848 to 1920. Each chapter begins with a narrative passage that clearly and concisely introduces the important themes and events of the movement, and each contains a stunning array of photographs, posters, political cartoons, leaflets, buttons, and documents. Suffragists come to life in the 78 individual biographical sketches with photographs that are incorporated throughout the book. A brief epilogue describes the impact of woman suffrage in the twentieth century.

Although *Winning the Vote* emphasizes the first two decades of the twentieth century, the earlier history of the movement is clearly grounded in the nineteenth-century antislavery and women's rights movements. One of the least understood aspects of the woman suffrage movement has been the state campaigns. Beginning with the unsuccessful 1867 referendum in Kansas, Cooney provides documents, photographs, and analysis of the 52 state referendum campaigns, including the failed 1916 Iowa referendum (316). He also includes documents from the antisuffragists and explains the significant financial resources of the opponents, especially the liquor interests. The early suffrage victories in the West and the suffrage failures in the East are emphasized. The successful 1911 referendum in California and the triumphant 1917 New York campaign are covered in detail.

The author does not avoid controversial issues and divisions within the suffrage movement. Rather, this history documents the numerous disagreements over strategy and tactics. This is a real strength because those disagreements show the diversity of activities that made up the movement. The drive for a federal constitutional amendment

revealed the level of strategic flexibility possible. The National American Suffrage Association avoided confrontational tactics, supported the war effort, and continued state campaigns. Members of the Congressional Union picketed the White House, campaigned against Democrats, and went on hunger strikes while in jail. All of these activities are covered in abundant photographs and documents.

Readers of the *Annals of Iowa* will find that Carrie Chapman Catt, Iowa's best-known suffragist and the leader of the National American Woman Suffrage Association in its final years, is given the attention she deserves. Cooney traces Catt's career in Iowa from 1885, when she joined the Iowa Suffrage Association (68), until she helped to organize the League of Women Voters in the 1920s. Midwestern readers will also appreciate the careful coverage of the state referendum campaigns in Illinois, Nebraska, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and South Dakota.

For the general reader, this work is an excellent introduction to the history of woman suffrage. For the collector of campaign and woman suffrage memorabilia, it displays rare campaign posters and buttons. This volume is valuable for those who pursue research in state and local history because of the index and bibliographical references. Cooney has done the hard work of finding, identifying, and analyzing some new primary sources from dozens of research collections scattered across the country. *Winning the Vote* is the successful culmination of the National Women's History Project to celebrate the 85th anniversary of the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment.

*A Mind of Her Own: Helen Connor Laird and Family, 1888–1982*, by Helen L. Laird. Wisconsin Land and Life Series. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006. xvii, 508 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95 cloth.

Reviewer Theresa Kaminski is professor of history at the University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point. She is the author of *Prisoners in Paradise: American Women in the Wartime South Pacific* (2000).

What makes an individual worthy of a full-length biography? Typically, subjects of biographies are national or international figures or, a bit more unusually, they are ordinary people whose lives represent something important about larger issues. Although Helen Connor Laird came from an influential Wisconsin family, she fits more easily into the latter category. So the critical question, at least for assessing the value of this book for historians, is whether author Helen L. Laird has been able to connect her life to the important issues of twentieth-century political history and American women's history.