

## Southern States Woman Suffrage Conference

Mrs. John B. Parker, Cor. Sec'y  
1520 Audubon St., New Orleans  
Mrs. Emma Maddox Hauck, Per. Sec'y  
1613 Cutaw Place, Baltimore, Md.



Kate M. Gordon, President  
1800 Virginia St., New Orleans, La.  
Laura Clay, Vice-President at Large  
Lexington, Ky.

Mrs. Geo. E. Cunningham, Treasurer  
Little Rock, Ark.  
Mrs. Nellie Nugent Samerbylle,  
1st Auditor, Greenville, Miss.  
Miss Jennie Lauderdale, 2d Auditor  
Petersburg, Tenn.

"A government is not yet complete  
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women what it freely gives to its most  
benighted men." Thomas Jefferson

February 2 1914.

(Clay and Boyer)

My dear Friends:

I am sending to you copies of my reply to Mrs. Medill McCormick. I was almost struck silly by receiving a letter Saturday asking for advice and co-operation. Stating she would use my letter to the Governors as a form of propaganda and ordering a thousand copies of Which Way.

We are all rather inclined to think it is a bid for me to line up with the Nationals in this nasty political mess which their ignorance of any National idea has brought about. Miss Shaw has as much of a National grasp of affairs as my cat, and that dangerous little Dent with her view point bound by ~~New England~~, north east south and west by New England will yet get the whole country in a genuine row.

Jeannie says that Mrs. Blatch says New York suffragists are all fighting like kilkenny cats and every faction attributing motives that are incredible. I wanted both of you to be in touch with the situation and to see how very diplomatic I was to the lady stranger.

I came back from the Miss. Legislature and had an attack of ptomaine poison so am behind with my appeal letters <sup>for</sup> ~~to~~ the Southern Conference. The attitude of the Miss. men makes it positive that none but southern women can handle this suffrage situation in the south. I went through a catechism to see that I was the genuine article, and woe would have been my fate if any yankee blood in my makeup had accounted for my suffrage tendencies. Seriously though the race issue has to be met in this fight.

Cordially

Kate M Gordon.



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Thomas Jefferson

February 11, 1914.

To the Officers of the Southern States Woman Suffrage Conference.  
Dear Friends:

I am sending you the copy of a letter I am sending out with pledge slips in the hope of raising the money to carry on the splendid opportunity for suffrage work that the Southern Conference has been called into existence to do. Can any of you make use of ~~any~~ them? A personal note accompanying it may secure some members or donations. It should be explained that the \$100 donation could be raised by securing 25 members to the Conference and collecting their contributions each year.

The action of the Democratic Caucus in going out of their way to offer as a reason for not creating a House Committee on suffrage that it was "a state and not a federal right" confirms the wisdom of our having formed this Southern Conference. I will next week invite every one to join us in membership. If the President will continue to show how absolutely women are without representation in government, until their opinions are expressed thro the organic body, I think we will be able to make it very difficult for the Donkey not to bray "votes for women" when the next organic body frames its platform.

to

I have appealed the National Board to pay Mrs Boyers salary until such a time as we could get on our feet financially. I did this because Mrs. Medill McCormick had appealed to me for co-operation in organization and propaganda. My first appeal however which I made in the form of political advice was a suggestion for the National to suggest to all the suffrage organizations to line up with the Southern Conference. I did this because it was evident that many of our southern State organizations labored under the impression that we were antagonistic to the National. I understand that Mrs. McCormick considers the the purpose of the Southern Conference as good politics.

If the National accedes to my request to pay Mrs. Boyer's salary then I will make a great effort to open the H'qrs in New Orleans. Wont you all get your thinking caps on and see what can be done in raising money especially through memberships. I want to say that I was astonished to find among the Miss. legislators what an intense sectional feeling existed in regard to Woman suffrage. I think it has been engendered by the Ntl. Amendment agitation. The ghost of reconstruction stalked boldly. It will take we southern women to rebury him. The Congressional Union will get a shock.

Cordially  
Kate M Gordon.



189 N. Mill St., Lexington, Ky.

Febr. 23rd, 1914.

My dear Miss Gordon,

Miss Grimm has written me that she has you down on her program for an address at the Mississippi Valley Conference in Des Moines, and that she wants to make some engagements for you on the way. I had the opportunity to bring the matter before our Fayette E.R.A. this afternoon, and we all want you in Kentucky. So I was instructed to write to you and ask your terms. Also, we wish to know your route to Des Moines, so as to decide whether to try to make arrangements in Paducah in the western part of the state, or in Lexington and thence to Louisville, that is, ~~or~~ through the eastern and middle of the state. We are now in the midst of our campaign and we desire to take every opportunity to give our people a chance to hear our best speakers.

Is it much out of your way to go from Louisville to Paducah?

I shall certainly expect you to be my guest if your way should be through Lexington.

I am off and on in Frankfort and at home. Mrs. Breckinridge is taking the laboring oar in the campaign, and I am trying to help as far as I can. We think we have a fighting chance to win the submission of our amendment, but we are not sanguine.

Please remember me to your sisters, and write immediately, as you know speeches take time to arrange for.

Very cordially your friend,

P.S. If you have any suggestions about the route through Ky., don't hesitate to let me know. We wish to reach all points of the state during the year.



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March 28, 1914.

My dear Miss Clay:

Glad to know that you are improving. I will go on to Lexington just as soon as I can after the Des Moines meeting. However, I hope to get some of the clans together in St. Louis on Wednesday and talk Southern Conference. I will keep you up until midnight telling you all the things that I know in connection with this work. If a Paducah engagement is made en route to Lexington, then send word to General Delivery, St. Louis, or wire to the Des Moines Convention. If not, then I will go through to Lexington and be with you on Thursday morning and leave Friday, for I must get home as soon as possible, the work is accumulating so.

You will be glad to know that I have pledged to the Southern Conference, on the four-year plan, about \$2,000 and Mrs. Belmont's \$1,000 makes nearly \$3,000. Mrs. Stoner is doing splendid work going through the Southeastern States, and as she is fairly possessed with the Southern Conference idea, she is making a fine money collection.

I am writing the Board today for a clear understanding of Mrs. Dennett's letter.

Affectionately,

*Kate M. Gordon*  
per L.C.

Dict., but not read.



Lexington, Ky., 489 N. Mill St.,

Mar. 24, 1914.

Miss Kate Gordon,

New Orleans, La.

My dear Miss Gordon:

I am so glad that you can come to Lexington and that you are going to Des Moines. I hope that you will be able to pay me a little visit and will not have to hurry off when you get here.

Our local president, Mrs. Will D. Oldham, wants you to come on April 3rd, which is Friday. If anything prevents you from coming that date, telegraph her. Her number is 801 S. Lime/, Lexington, Ky.

I am getting better all the time and while I shall not be able to go to Des Moines, I shall be ready to enjoy your visit to the utmost. Please give my regards to your sisters and looking forward to your visit, I am

Very affectionately yours,



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Petersburg, Tenn.

Marhh21, 1914.

My dear MissClay:

I found it impossible to get time to write that second letter. I have about made up my mind that I must go to the Miss. Val. Conference in order to promote our Southern situation. I am distressed beyond measure to learn that you cannot be there, but will go out of my way to go to Lexington in order to see you. Do you think it likely that an engagement would be made in Paducah. If so, I could stop there the 2nd or 3rd and be in Lexington the 4th or 5th. I just must have a talk with you.

I have dictated a letter which will reach you next week, telling of Mrs. Belmont's donation of \$1,000 to the Southern Conference.

I had no results to speak of from the conference with the Board. Miss Shaw was not there and it is evident Dennett will knife anything that will take one cent away from the National Association, even though it would give suffrage to women.

What do you think of, in my opinion, this dangerous Amendment No. 2. I wish to goodness that we could get a National Board that would be representative; that is, with women on it from different parts of the Union who would prevent some of the goings-on that has characterized the recent events, Nationally. I had a wicked delight when I finally heard Mrs. Dennett confess the impossibility of ever carrying a National Amendment. It finally dawned on their intelligences when they learned the enfranchised States represented refused to endorse it.



[Mar. 21, 1914]

When I think of all the money that has been wasted in the last few years, first, with Mrs. Catt's agitation, and now with this recent agitation, it makes me sick. Never any money for legitimate State work! I have much to tell you. It would take reams and reams of paper to write it, so you will hear from me when we meet.

Affectionately yours,

*Kate M. Gordon*

P.S. If more convenient to have meeting in Lexington 3rd or 4th, I could take in Paducah on my return, as it is little above the junction on the main line of the Illinois Central.



Louisiana State Suffrage Association.

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT



"A government is not complete that withholds from its most enlightened citizens what it freely gives to its most benighted men."

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

March 1, 1914.

My dear Miss Clay:

I just do not know how to answer your letter about Kentucky. I have just received a telegram from Miss Shaw asking me to substitute for her in Jacksonville and Charleston and I am leaving tonight to do this. From Charleston, I am invited to meet the National Board at Birmingham and confer with them on the Southern situation. I take it, from this invitation and from the fact that that arch-demon, Mary Ware Dennett, has written me that the National's policy is to be modified, that they intend to cooperate with the Southern Conference-- and cooperation, of course, will mean financial assistance-- in that event we will have Mrs. Boyer down here in the course of a month and really and truly launch the work of the Conference. I am getting congratulatory letters from all sections of the country upon the fine political situation we have and upon our plan of attack from the inside upon the Democratic Convention.

I filled Miss Shaw's date in Dallas; made them pay me \$30.00 and expenses, then came back and worked for two days at a Mardi Gras luncheon for the benefit of the Era Club. Wednesday morning found that Mrs. Medill McCormick's representative, a Mrs. Stoner, would arrive for a conference. She has grown enthusiastic over the Southern situation and promised to raise me some money. Now, coming immediately upon Mrs. Stoner's departure, are these other engagements, so you see how hard it is for me to sit down and plan a route. But I will tomorrow on the train study the guidebook and will see whether Paducah would take me too much out of the way to make it a paying engagement en route.

Miss Grim wrote me asking if three \$25.00 engagements were made would I go, as I had written her that it looked as though it were a financial impossibility for me to get there. I have written back, yes, but I do not wish under any circumstances for you to be made to assume the responsibility that you assumed last year. This seems a very indefinite letter, but I cannot write any more now. If you can make some engagements for me in Kentucky conditionally, I will be glad to fill them going or coming to the conference. I am anxious to attend the conference in order to present the Southern situation.

Affectionately yours,

*Kate M. Lindou*  
*per L.C.*

Dict., but not read.



[April 13, 1914]

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COPY.

March 17, 1914.

Miss Kate Gordon,  
1800 Prytania St.,  
New Orleans, La.

Dear Miss Gordon:-

I wish we had had more time in Birmingham, particularly so that we might have heard more in detail what your objections were to the second resolution for a National Amendment. Dr Shaw told me today that she had had a letter from you, and doubtless she will tell us tomorrow what you wrote about it.

The Board, after discussing your proposition for the southern conference and the establishment of permanent headquarters in New Orleans and your request that the National Assn. pay the salary, \$2000 for instance, of Mrs Boyer for special press work in the south, voted that inasmuch as the Association had no funds available at the present it would be quite impossible to accede to the request in regard to the salary of Mrs Boyer or any one else. The Board voted also to suggest the great value of holding an annual conference of southern suffrage workers on the same general plan as that of the annual Miss. Valley Conference.

The Board voted also to take under careful consideration a plan for special press work in the south. The Press Bureau now being maintained in Washington under the auspices of the National is conducted by a very experienced newspaper man, Mr Arthur Dunn, and while his work is bearing primarily upon the National Amendment, he is doing a great deal of general propaganda work and will be able to do, we think, a large amount of special work throughout the south. He is putting special emphasis upon reaching the papers of smaller towns and cities. Can we not, with your suggestions and help, work out a systematic plan for having suffrage information from the south sent to Mr Dunn's office in Washington and suffrage material sent out from his office to the southern newspapers? We all agreed with you most heartily that nothing could exceed the importance of the right kind of press work in the south, and we should be exceedingly glad to hear from you more in detail what your plan was and to do everything we possibly can to help carry it out with what machinery we have already and to develop new machinery as quickly as may be.

Sincerely yours,

Mary Ware Bennett.



189 N. Mill, Lexington, Ky.

April 13, 1914.

My dear Miss Gordon,

Well, I read the "sealed correspondence" promptly, and was so far from "numb", that I was exhilarated when I read the figures so that I could not finish the letter till I had given vent to my feelings by a joyous tune on the piano! Who could have anticipated such good luck? I shall be all eagerness till I hear that Mrs. Boyer is installed and the good work begun. I wrote a note of appreciation to Mrs. Belmont next morning, and as I cannot write much each day, had to put off returning that precious correspondence till today.

I hope now that we have such a fund that you will consider it possible to provide the president of the S.S.W.S. Conference with means to enable her to be most useful to the cause, as I talked about when you were here.

I am improving steadily, and went out to church yesterday for the first time. It was a beautiful spring day, not yet warm, but pleasant.

Your little visit cheered and benefitted me. Mrs. Oldham our president, was delighted with your meetings; and I trust we may be able to get some members from for the Conference. I wish you would consider what I said about freememberships, and ~~take~~ expect dues generally only from associations, local or state. Dues bring in very little money, and when we get people interested we can get money in larger sums. I do not think you need come to any decision about it till the next convention; and by ~~the~~ that time you will have had time to see what change, if any is desirable. I must not write longer, as I must write some other letters. Give my regards to your sisters. I enclose Mrs. Belmont's letters. Let me say I entirely approve her point that you alone should have the direction of the affairs of the S.S.W.S. Conference.

Affectionately yours,



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April 13, 1914.

To the Officers of the  
National American Woman Suffrage Association.

Dear Fellow Suffragists:

I am enclosing a copy of the official reply to my requests in regard to the National Association's co-operation with the Southern States Woman Suffrage Conference. I do this because I feel that the recommendations therein contained show a total lack of grasp of what was desired.

In regard to the appropriation or loan to launch the movement, I can fully understand that the National was not in a position to give this aid, and upon second thought I really feel that it will be better that the relations of the Association while perfectly amicable should be absolutely independent of initiative, but when the board suggests, in reply to my request that steps be taken to allay any feeling of antagonism that might exist between the Southern Conference and the National--"the value of holding an annual conference of southern suffrage workers on the same general plan as that of the annual meeting of the Mississippi Valley Conference"--I am forced to one of two conclusions: either that the board has no grasp of the purposes of either organization, or that the recommendation is absurd.

The Mississippi Valley Conference is an organization without a policy, a constitution, or officers--just a coming together of workers once a year to discuss methods. The Southern States Woman Suffrage Conference, on the contrary, is an organization created to take advantage of a political situation which demands definite action in a limited time, an organization whose distinct aim and purpose is to take advantage of a situation which means suffrage success from any view point you may take it, for if the Democrats fail to endorse us in their platform at the next National Convention, they provide us with the best suffrage "big stick" that the National Amendment advocates can ever hope to have. This is what my Governors' letter is intended to convey and which makes me define it as a flank movement. This letter has the fullest endorsement of Mrs. Medill McCormick, who asked for its use in her Congressional work, and Mrs. Dennet recommends it as having been pronounced very clever and will use it in some Southern article she purposes writing. Viewed therefore from these several standpoints, the National Board must see that its recommendations are both useless and absurd.



[AM-13, 1914]

In regard to the Southern press work, to which you have given careful consideration and to which you have heartily agreed "that nothing could exceed the importance", etc/, your recommendation for me to turn over this work to a man who may or may not have a National vision, and to attempt work at such a long range of such a delicate nature, seems to me to again indicate a lack of grasp of the Southern situation. I infer from this recommendation that the Board concludes that its inability to financially help the S.S.W.S.C. makes its reality unlikely and that it offers to co-operate with Mr. Dunn as a substitute. Again I repeat, this leaves me to feel that the Board has not grasped the significance of this Southern idea and that while it is a vital suffrage opportunity for all suffragists, it must be handled from within, and by within I mean by Southerners appreciating the delicacy of the race situation. Your representative, Mrs Booth, at the Mississippi Valley Conference, recognized this when she spoke of the Southern situation being the "crux of the suffrage question in the United States and of necessity to be handled by Southerners".

I am happy to report that far from its being necessary to submit my plan for execution to the National representative a thousand miles away, that we will be able to develop it under Southern supervision. The S.S.W.S.C. headquarters will open as our May Day suffrage celebration. Thanks to Mrs Belmont's splendid contribution, which put hope in us all and actually set the wheels in motion, we have been able to announce the of our headquarters May 1st, and have telegraphed Mrs Boyer to be with us. A contribution from a Southern politician of \$1,000, received anonymously the other day, and with pledges in hand, gives us \$4,500 to start with.

I am also happy to report that magnificent headquarters have been donated free, as long as the building remains unrented or unsold. This this start, and the way the Mississippi Valley Conference took to the proposition, makes me feel that as soon as we have the necessary equipment to arouse sentiment in behalf of the idea, not only the South, but all suffragists in the Union, will see the wisdom of this flank movement.

Now, to sum up. If the Board has not, as I feel, grasped the significance of this Southern movement and what I wished done, as outlined in my letter of Feb 7th, will it definitely state to the Southern suffrage organizations, Maryland, District of Columbia, Virginia, N. & S. Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Tennessee, Kentucky, Missouri, its confidence in the Southern Conference as not antagonistic to the National organization.

That this feeling has been awakened must have been recognized by those officers present at the Birmingham conference. This is confirmed by the attitude of the Ala. Executive Committee, which voted March 12th "not to join any permanent organization separate from and not affiliated with or auxiliary to the S.A.W.S.A. By permanent organization is meant an organization requiring fixed headquarters and dues, such as the Southern Conference." When I met the Ala. Executive Committee, they, too, were willing to join the Southern Conference, if patterned after the Miss. Valley Conference. They differed from the National, however, in the value of special press work for the South; Alabama's press work was cited as covering the need.



E Apr. 13, 1914

The attitude of Mrs Jacobs to the Southern Conference at the recent Birmingham conference is incomprehensible, particularly when I am able to quote from her letter of last July, when she states " shall be glad to sign as President of the Ala. Equal Suffrage Association, a call from for the Conference of Southern Governors and regret my inability to be present in New Orleans in November. Surely the solid South will no longer permit its Democratic strength to be menaced by the West. Such an obviously simple political expedient as enfranchising the white woman of the South ought to appeal, if no higher motive moves them, to consider the woman suffrage question seriously". After more in this vein she states, "I am so glad you have taken the initiative in this matter and hope something definite will come of it." You can therefore imagine my surprise to have found the situation of antagonism I did when I went to Birmingham to meet the Board by invitation of Miss Shaw.

This situation makes it very important to be able to state definitely what the attitude of the National is to the Southern Conference. The Southern Conference states without fear or equivocation that our movement is not antagonistic to the National, but is a flank movement, necessary for the development of suffrage work in the South particularly and the United States in general.

Will the Board therefore send me at its next meeting as unequivocal endorsement, or rejection, of this movement. I tell you candidly I feel that your reply to my request does not cover the situation.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) Kate M. Gordon.



Apr. 8, 1914

### Southern States Woman Suffrage Conference

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April 8<sup>th</sup>

My dear Miss Clay: Here is my "bread & butter letter" delayed all these days but if you ca. peep in at 1800 & see the work I'm trying to straighten out and the interruptions & demands on my time you would understand. Hope you are steadily growing better and that my visit had no bad effects - Recd. the letter paper with account of my address - The paper treated me generously, - I was not satisfied with my address, - it seemed to me I was very labored & certainly was not worth the generous sum paid me.

How can you keep a secret? - if so, open & read the correspondence. Be prepared for a surprise. I-



made me numb for several  
days -

Hill announces to-morrow  
the opening of our Southern  
High the 1<sup>st</sup> of May - Tele-  
graphed Boy's Holiday -  
He will celebrate our May  
day by the opening of the  
High - How of course if  
you can't - Keep a secret, just  
return the letters. But being  
of the female persuasion  
I guess you will succumb  
to this sex? weakness. I  
warn you be ready for  
a surprise.

I hope you are better

Affectionately

Wm. H. Gordon



[Apr. 8, 1914]

How- you write- her a note-  
of appreciation - I've written  
to her I just- had to let- you  
know about- it--



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April 22nd, 1914.

My dear Fellow Officers:-

You will be glad to know that we will open our Southern Headquarters on May 2nd. That is the form our May Day Suffrage celebration will take and I hope that the effect will be felt all through the South.

I am enclosing my letter to the Board in order that you may be in full touch with the situation. You will recall I asked two requests of the official Board in my February letter. First, to express to the Southern States its confidence that this Southern movement was not antagonistic to the National, but a flank movement of vital interest to the whole Suffrage movement of the United States.

I was telegraphed to meet the official Board in Birmingham. I had every reason to believe they were going to endorse us, but I found a spirit of opposition in Alabama that was incomprehensible. Some little time after my return, I received Mrs Dennett's official reply, which I felt was not a reply so I determined to show to all the members of the Board my points of difference, and to make the Board assume the responsibility of refusing to express confidence in this Southern movement. We will not have a reply to this letter until the Board meets the beginning of May.

I cannot express to you the enthusiasm with which the Southern idea was received at the Mississippi Valley Conference. With the little work that I have done we have five thousand dollars; twenty seven hundred in actual money and twenty three hundred in pledges, and I do not believe we will have much trouble to raise one hundred thousand if we all put our shoulders to the wheel.

I am drafting a resolution to be submitted to our meeting, May 2nd, for endorsement. I will send this resolution to all the Southern States in the hope that it will be passed. I think the National is realizing the futility of attempting to pass the National Amendment until at least this preliminary step is taken in the South.

I enclose pledges to all of you. Cannot you go out into your communities and secure members or donations? Do you know the names of Suffragists or means to whom a letter of appeal can be written? I will be glad to write them, if you do not care to write yourself.

With cordial regards,

Faithfully,

Kate M. Gordon



## Southern States Woman Suffrage Conference

MRS. JOHN B. PARKER, COR. SECY.  
1520 AUDUBON ST., NEW ORLEANS  
MRS. EMMA MADDOX FUNCK, REC. SECY.  
1613 EUTAW PLACE, BALTIMORE, MD.  
MRS. GEO. E. CUNNINGHAM, TREASURER  
LITTLE ROCK, ARK.

KATE M. GORDON, PRESIDENT  
1800 PRYTANIA ST., NEW ORLEANS, LA.  
LAURA CLAY, VICE-PRES. AT LARGE  
LEXINGTON, KY.

HEADQUARTERS  
332 BARONNE STREET  
NEW ORLEANS, LA.

MRS. NELLIE NUGENT SOMERVILLE  
1ST AUDITOR, GREENVILLE, MISS.  
MISS JENNIE LAUDERDALE, 2ND AUDITOR  
DYERSBURG, TENN.  
IDA PORTER-BOYER, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY  
NEW ORLEANS, LA.



TELEPHONE M 187

NEW ORLEANS, LA., May 15th 1914. 191

Miss Laura Clay,  
Lexington, Ky.

My dear Fellow Officers:-

I have been so busy since my return from Georgia that I have not had time to report the wonderful opening of our Headquarters and the arrival in New Orleans of Mrs Boyer. I sent pictures of the headquarters to the Woman's Journal and hope that all of you will get some idea of how we are getting on through their account.

I take pleasure in reporting to you the passage of a resolution of confidence by the National Board. The resolution reads as follows:-

"The Board of the National American Woman Suffrage Association expresses its confidence in the general idea of the Southern Conference, and does not consider the movement antagonistic to the National Association; moreover, the Board appreciates the political wisdom of rapidly building up suffrage sentiment in the South by special systematic work."

I am, however, asking them to strike out the words, "in the general idea of the" as I think it weakens its sense.

We must now all "GET BUSY" and make an effort to secure members for there is no argument which will influence public opinion so forcibly as the argument of paid-up membership.

Very cordially,

*Kate M. Gordon*  
CM



July 12, 1943

MARBLE HOUSE

July 12 th.

My dear Miss Clay:

In my grand surroundings just a line to report - what a successful meeting we had.

I do not know whether it is the good influence of Miss Reilly on our Southern Conference patron but she really seems anxious to help in every

way<sup>in</sup> that line of the work - If the woman's head <sup>is</sup> was turned by the farming + begging of the supplicants I would not blame her -

Some of the women in the hope of social recognition others for money are disgusting

The Duchess is charming and I believe independent - of her wealth + position could make her mark as a social worker.



I will make a list of all the names of the people who are interested in the work of the Cross

I am going to Wash. D.C. to  
visit Helen Gardner & see Mrs. Stone.  
I will then arrange our Conference  
dates. Mrs. Belmont is willing  
to speak and authorizes me to  
use her donation any way I choose  
— my hope is to arrange a  
meeting successive nights in  
Baltimore - Wash. Richmond  
Raleigh - Charleston or Columbia -  
Atlanta - then to Tenn. for  
the Convention. The lady seems  
full of it - and Miss Reilly  
says we will no doubt stand  
a very good chance to get  
another "breathless surprise." So  
make no definite engagements  
for November.

I've been so overworked I've  
had no chance to write you  
how splendidly the press work  
is developing. We have circulated  
6000 papers - about 1000 are taking  
our staff - & we have not been at it  
6 weeks. I am very very hopeful  
for our work. How are you? - Although  
I hope - when I get to Wash. I



## Southern States Woman Suffrage Conference

MRS. JOHN B. PARKER, COR. SECY.  
1520 AUDUBON ST., NEW ORLEANS  
MRS. EMMA MADDOX FUNCK, REC. SECY.  
1613 EUTAW PLACE, BALTIMORE, MD.  
MRS. GEO. E. CUNNINGHAM, TREASURER  
LITTLE ROCK, ARK.

KATE M. GORDON, PRESIDENT  
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HEADQUARTERS  
332 BARONNE STREET  
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MISS JENNIE LAUDERDALE, 2ND AUDITOR  
DYERSBURG, TENN.  
IDA PORTER-BOYER, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY  
NEW ORLEANS, LA.

TELEPHONE M 187

NEW ORLEANS, LA.

August 19.

191

[1914]

My dear Miss Clay:

Our time has so been taken up with this disgraceful row relative to the President's condolence message that I have had no time to attend to my legitimate correspondence. I want you to understand the attitude of the club and my letter and the Official report gives a fair report. At first I thought the deliberations of an executive committee had been given by a traitor member, for Mrs. Skinner the mover of the resolution to send the message was found a few weeks ago giving a derogatory letter about the Era Club to the members of the Legislature. But I believe now and we have pretty strong evidence that the same found on his knees eaves dropping at the second meeting was concealed eavesdropping at this meeting. The man John Meehan caught on his knees getting material for a half truth slander is the husband of the Founder of the Woman Suffrage Party and the leader of all the disgraceful newspaper notoriety in a malicious effort to discredit the club and me particularly.

As things now stand the veracity of 14 of the best women of New Orleans is challenged by the Times-Picayune in favor of a sneak caught in the act of eaves dropping to get material to use against a Woman's organization. And in order to get the official report of the Era Club published without their blue pencil on the point of their reporter John Meehan we had to pay 25 cents a line. We believe the attitude of the Times Picayune has been largely instigated by the fact that the Era Club lately appointed ~~in~~ a committee to investigate an exposition project, in which the newspapers were all interested but which disgracefully mulcted the working people of over a hundred thousand dollars and in which the publicity we demanded disclosed a dreadful condition of affairs.

The President of the club is a T-P special reporter. Jeannie and I are very much criticized for indorsing her for the Presidency. The woman is capable of good presence and fine voice\_\_ she had some bitter enemies, but I never believed her dishonorable. About three or four months ago there was circulated among the club women some dreadful letters attacking her character. Her friends felt that the best way to show to a contemptible sneak who employed anonymous means to blast character was to ~~in~~ express our confidence by electing her President of the most powerful woman's organization in the city. She will I think be impeached. The awful part to me is that at the bottom of the whole thing is the treachery of the women of Woman Suffrage Party. Miss Hutson the reporter of the Item who first published the lie based on a half truth of a sneak reporter is a member of the Party and will move heaven and earth to destroy the club. I consider even more important than woman suffrage the starting of a movement to make newspapers responsible for the information they take money from the public. I have consulted the District Attorney on whether I had a criminal libel suit--- but the technicalities are all in favor of the papers. One is defenceless.

I find that your letter is at home so cannot answer the points in regard to dates. I have not yet secured the information that will definitely



at to \$10,000 fund

permit me to say whether our itinerary before the Convention will take place. One thing I have determined upon is to hold in Chattanooga our annual convention. I am trying to get Mrs Ruth McEnergy Stuart to be one of our speakers and to convert "Sonny" into a suffragists\_\_ of course a States Rights one. I think your suggestion in regard to Mrs Hubbard excellent. Will write her to-morrow.

Now Miss Clay I want to write you on my financial situation. The rat proofing of New Orleans will make us do some work in this regard on three pieces of property that will interfere with our income. Then the main dependency we have is some stove stock and it is feared that this business will be seriously interfered with on account of the war in Europe our chief market. I have had a large number of invitations to speak , but I feel obligated to stick to this Southern Conference work. In fact I give my entire day at the office. In dependent of the Belmont donation I have pledged about 5000 dollars. Do you think I would be justified in paying myself a salary \_\_\_ I have the authority of Mrs. Belmont to spend that money any way I see fit to do so. You remember the letter. Now my position is this \_\_\_ I would be only too glad to give my service s but certain conditions make it very necessary to earn some money. Would I be justified in paying myself a salary and any money I earn speaking for the conference I return to the Treasury of the Conference. Let me have your view point on this . Of course if I was at liberty to say we had the ten thousand it would be somethin for the Board to decide but Mrs Belmont seems very positive about not having this known. Kindest regards to your sisters.

Affectionately,  
Kate M. Gordon.



Richmond, Ky.

Aug. 22nd, 1914.

My dear Miss Gordon,

Your letter of the 19th is at hand.

I am sorry you have been worried about the President's condolence message. I think your position about it is exactly right. I see no reason why the Era Club should write a message of condolence. I trust the annoying circumstance will quickly drop into oblivion; but perhaps that is too good to be hoped for.

Now as to business: You know that I have always thought you ought to have a salary so that you could devote your time to the work of the Southern Conference. Certainly, its work demands a directing mind at leisure to attend to its mission; and certainly that mind is yourself. My first letter to the treasurer, Mrs. Cunningham, expressed the wish that a salary might be paid you. Now that you have the means to do so guaranteed, I feel that it is right and expedient that you should be made financially able to give your time to that work. From Mrs. Belmont's letter which I read, it seems to me you have authority to pay yourself a salary according to your judgment. However, as there is a Board of officers, I believe it would altogether better, to secure yourself from any possible criticism, to <sup>submit</sup> ~~raise~~ the matter to a vote of the Board. The question might be put in some such form as this: "shall a salary of -----  
-- so much be paid to Miss Gordon out of any funds available for such a purpose?.. It might be added that money from addresses made in the interest of the Conference would go to this fund; and it is also a frequent occurrence that friends will make an extra exertion to raise funds for



for such a salary when it appeals to them. Therefore, submitting the matter to the Board would not necessitate revealing Mrs. Belmont's donation. In view of the plain fact that you have enemies I would advise a vote of the Board, for that would make you safe from any cavilling criticism. But from my understanding of Mrs. Belmont's letter, you have the individual right to expend the donation according to your own judgment. Mrs. Belmont intimates that a time may come when she will be willing that her large donation should be made public. If that time should come, you will no doubt be expected to give some sort of details of the way in which it was expended; and therefore in your place I would make it a rule to get the advice of the Board on the chief heads of expenditure, at least. This would always relieve you of the burden of responsibility, but it would not require any thing more than a general statement that you could secure money for certain imperative expenses besides the money which was known to be contributed. I take it that such knowledge is already public property, for certainly what you are now doing is arousing in the curious the query of "where is the money coming from?" My suggestion that you should submit the question to the Board is a piece of unofficial advice, as I think you have a right to do according to your judgment with the Belmont donation. Officially, I will say that I approve of your receiving a salary; and I will vote to that effect if it is submitted to a vote of the Board.

I am glad you are going to hold the Conference convention in Chattanooga. I think Chattanooga has been badly treated about the convention of the N.A.W.S.A.

Please give my regards to your sisters, and to Mrs. Boyer, and believe me

Very cordially yours,



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NEW ORLEANS, LA.



TELEPHONE M 187

NEW ORLEANS, LA. Sept. 16, 1914. 191

Miss Laura Clay,  
Richmond, Ky.

My dear Miss Clay,

The enclosed letter has been returned to me because of its having been addressed to Richmond, Va. Note its contents and let me know at once about your convention.

Chattanooga is enthusiastic over the prospect of the holding of our conference there, and I believe we will have a very creditable meeting. I am rejoicing to-day because I have just received a letter from a Mrs. Talbot Brown. She saw my name in a Washington paper, and being a Southern woman she became interested enough to write me a letter about the Southern Conference. I had Helen Gardiner and Mrs. Stoner call upon her. and so to-day I am in receipt of \$100 from her. I did not tell you that on my tour of Washington and Atlanta I secured pledges to the extent of \$800, \$100 of which has been paid. It is interesting to me to see how much more readily people will give to the Southern suffrage movement than they will to the National.

Very cordially,

*Kate M. Gordon*



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301 Carondelet St.

TELEPHONE M 187

NEW ORLEANS, LA., Sept. 17, 1914. 191

To the Officers of the Southern Conference;

My dear Friends;

I am very happy to announce that Chattanooga has accepted my invitation to hold the annual conference of our association in that city. Will you not all make a special effort to be present? Nov. 10 and 11 have been the dates assigned, and we hope for a goodly gathering due to the fact that the National American Woman's Suffrage Association will hold its annual convention beginning March 12 in Nashville.

As officers, you will be rejoiced to hear of the splendid progress we have made during our short existence. Our press service is reaching out to a thousand newspapers weekly, and our membership is growing. We have fine headquarters in New Orleans which we get rent free, and through the generosity of a friend I am able to furnish every legislator in the South the Woman's Journal.

If we keep up our present rate of progress that Democratic donkey will be more than ready to bray "Votes for Women in 1916".

Cordially yours,

*Kate M. Gordon*



Richmond, Ky.

Sept. 19th, 1914.

My dear Miss Gordon,

Yours of the 15th received by the last mail. Our Ky. State convention is to meet in Owensboro, the 5th, 6th & 7th of November. Our school suffrage prevents many of our women from attending till after election day, so that is why we are so late. I fear Owensboro is quite out of the way, since it is west of Louisville. I think it would be delightful to have the Southern Conference with us one night, and I know Mrs. Breckinridge tried to get Mrs. Belmont to attend our convention but the date conflicted with other of her engagements. Mrs. Belmont takes great interest in our Ky. campaign, and gave Mrs. Breckinridge \$500.00 for it last year.

While I would be delighted to have the Southern Conference, our Board voted some time ago to let Mrs. Breckinridge have the ~~entire~~ entire arrangement of the program, because it is so hard to get speakers just on the dates we want them. So if it happens that Owensboro is not too much out of the way, you should write to Mrs. Breckinridge at once.

I am delighted that you are succeeding so well with your financial plans. I thought from the first you could get money quite as readily as the National. The South is the strategic section and States Rights the great obstacle now to U.S. Congressional help. So naturally, the eyes of suffragists are turned to the South.

Give my love to Mrs. Boyer and to your sisters. I shall hold myself in readiness for the dates you fix for the Conference.

Very cordially yours,



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301 Carondelet St.

TELEPHONE M 187

NEW ORLEANS, LA., September 8, 1914. 191

Miss Laura Clay,  
Richmond, Va.

My dear Miss Clay:-

I note that you are to hold your Kentucky State Convention the 5,6, and 7 of November, and I am writing to know at what point. It does not seem practical to carry out our original itinerary before the Convention as both Richmond and North Carolina feel they could not prepare for a meeting with their Convention dates fixed for the 9 and 10th. I am wondering if your Convention was at no too distant a point from Roanoke, <sup>whether</sup> ~~that~~ one night of your Convention might be turned over to the Southern Conference.

I have a promise from Ruth McEnery Stuart, and with Mrs. Helen Gardner and Mrs. Belmont a very attractive program could be arranged. At any rate would you immediately let me know whether such a plan would meet with your approval? Make no engagement for the 10 and 11th of November, for I am awaiting the news from Chattanooga to know whether they will entertain our Southern Conference at that time. We are only a few hours away from Nashville, and can readily make the Nashville Convention on time.



[Sept 8, 1914]

I have just received the following telegram from Alice Blackwell: "Can you meet Miss Addams, Mrs. Catt, and me in Boston, September sixteen, seventeen or eighteen for informal peace conference to promote harmony between Congressional Union and National Association with view to better unify work after National Convention. Wire Journal collect." I wonder what it means. Of course, I am not going as I cannot afford such an expensive trip and also as my policy is not to meddle much with this National business, I think it wiser not to go. The truth of the matter is, I think the National publishing that black list puts them ~~actually~~ in the same position that the Congressional Union occupies and finds them advocating exactly what they denounce in the Union.

Affectionately,

Hale M. Gordon



Richmond, Ky.

Oct. 23rd, 1914.

My dear Miss Gordon,

I wrote hurriedly my last letter to you about the Conference work, and I did not write about some things I might have done about our State Convention. We have sent Miss Glenn to Owensboro to look after the convention details, and I am supposing she is attending to all of them, so I have dismissed most of them from my mind. Among other things, I suppose she is making arrangements for your entertainment as the guest of the Convention, and will notify you in due time where you are to be entertained. But for fear of finding you on the wing or otherwise failing to reach you in time, I am writing to say if you do not hear from her differently we want you to drive at once to the hotel. This is the Rudd House, the leading hotel there. I believe that is still the name of it. Anyway, the omnibus will know what hotel is meant. That is where I am now expecting to be myself, and I want to see you as much as possible, to get your ideas about the auxiliaryship of the Ky. E. F. A. to the Southern Conference, and who you want for the vice-president from Kentucky. You will think I am a very poor corresponding secretary not even to know for certain the name of the hotel; but I have been out of Lexington the whole summer and fall, and everything has been done from the Headquarters. You will be a very welcome guest among us. Do you know some of your hearers in Lexington preferred your address even to that of the famous Mrs. Philip Snowden?

With my regards to Mrs. Boyer and your sisters, I am

Very cordially yours,

Cor. Sec. Ky. E. F. A.

Cor. Sec



Richmond, Ky.

Oct. 21st, 1914.

My dear Miss Gordon,

I am very glad you are to be at the Ky. state convention. You and I must secure the State as a member of the Southern Conference. It is already a member of the Miss. Valley Conference, and it ought to be of the Southern Conference. Mrs. Breckinridge is not a States' Rights woman, but now that the National has declared that it approves of the Southern Conference I think she has no objection to the state joining.

My sister, Mrs. Bennett, and I will be at Chattanooga. Perhaps others.

I do not care to be on the program at Chattanooga; the time is usually overcrowded, and I have spoken several times in Chat. However, if you need me, put me on for what time you like, and for what subject, and write me at once. I find I am very lazy, and I want to go to the conventions only as a licker-on; but I know I ought to make myself useful when I can.

I have enjoyed seeing the new newspaper; and I enclose one dollar for one subscription for myself, and one to be given away where you desire.

Hoping to see you soon, I am

Affectionately yours,



# Southern States Woman Suffrage Conference

MRS. JOHN B. PARKER,  
Corresponding Secretary,  
1520 Audubon St., New Orleans.

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1613 Eutaw Place, Baltimore, Md.



KATE M. GORDON,  
President,  
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LAURA CLAY,  
Vice-President at Large,  
Lexington, Ky.

MRS. GEO. G. CUNNINGHAM,  
Treasurer,  
Little Rock, Ark.

MRS. NELLIE NUGENT SOMERVILLE,  
1st Auditor,  
Greenville, Miss.

MISS JENNIE LAUDERDALE,  
2nd Auditor,  
Dyersburg, Tenn.

*"A government is not yet complete that withholds from its most enlightened women what it freely gives to its most benighted men."*  
Thomas Jefferson.

1914.

My Dear Fellow-Suffragist:

A strategic position is held by southern suffragists. With the concentration of effort for a National Amendment the point of resistance will be the south. In the south the Democratic Party alone determines political policies, and the crux of the whole situation consists in making the Party live up to its traditions on States Rights and under which cloak it is hiding in its opposition to a National Amendment.

This means that a tremendous whirlwind campaign must be carried on in the south in the next two years to educate National, State and Local leaders of democratic opinion, that the democrats of the South cannot straddle the question of woman suffrage in the next National Platform. If we force the issue we have the party at bay on a fundamental principle—state rights—and upon which position the democrats of the enfranchised states can make a vulnerable attack for the preservation of party integrity.

By virtue of the race issue which is involved, the movement must by the very nature of things be under the guidance of southern women. Southern women must throw the gauntlet that declares, that if southern democrats do not preserve woman suffrage as a state right, we women who believe as unalterably as do the men in the expediency of a state defining its own electorate, will be forced to appeal to the men of other sections to secure for us our inalienable and greatest of all rights, the birthright of citizenship through a coercive National Amendment.

This propaganda must be spread through the 5700 news agencies of the south by a capable Press Agent; thro a series of State and Legislative Conferences; thro resolutions before the business leagues of the south; thro selected literature. With Headquarters established in New Orleans, I believe we will accomplish the most important suffrage work of any now in progress in the United States. It is a flank movement of essential importance for any effective result from the National Amendment agitation.

By virtue of the unorganized condition of the south I appeal to the suffragists of the United States to help launch this important work. There certainly must be 1000 suffragist in the United States who will pledge to give or raise \$100 payable in four years, at \$25 a year. If a sufficient number of pledges are secured I will borrow a sufficient sum to launch the movement immediately. May I appeal to your generosity to help us avail ourselves of an opportunity which is of vital importance to every well wisher of the suffrage cause.

Hoping for an early and favorable reply, I am

Cordially and fraternally,

*Kate M. Gordon*