

# **Indomitable Spirits**

**The Interrelationship between the  
Women's Suffrage and the Prohibition  
Movements in Oregon from 1883-1914**

**Essay by Mike Lobel  
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On a train car headed to Washington State in the year of 1910, the simultaneously renowned, hated, and revered suffragist Abigail Scott Duniway was drawn into a chance conversation with an old lady sitting next to her. Somehow, the topic of the prohibition of alcohol was broached. The elderly Abigail Scott Duniway, never one to refuse a controversial statement said “I believe we can protect ourselves from all the elements. We are protected from this snow-storm, but we can’t prohibit it. God has put it among the elements of nature. There is only one Power that is capable of prohibiting snow-storms or alcohol, and He doesn’t seem ready to act.” The old lady, a proud supporter of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) was highly offended, asked Duniway, “do you mean to say that God is the author of alcohol?” Duniway responded in her usual fearless manner, “certainly! The Bible tells us that God makes everything.” After hearing this blasphemy, the old lady declared, “I don’t want anything to do with your kind of God!” and furiously stormed away.<sup>1</sup> This conversation, described in Duniway’s memoir, *Path Breaking*, encapsulates the palpable tension between the prohibition and women’s suffrage movements in Oregon, a result of their ideological proximity during their conception in the late nineteenth century.

The prohibition of alcohol and women’s suffrage were topics at the core of life in the American West in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, inseparable in their effect on one another. While there has been much research done as to what propelled these movements, I am curious about how they were related. In my essay, I will address the question as to how these individual movements intertwined with one

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<sup>1</sup> Abigail Scott Duniway. *Path Breaking: An Autobiographical History of the Equal Suffrage Movement in Pacific Coast States* (James, Kerns & Abbott, 1914; reprint, New York: Schocken Books, 1971), 99.

another in Oregon. I will do this by first analyzing the rhetoric of the WCTU to illuminate this dedicated proponent of the women's suffrage and prohibition movements. I will then examine the general public and organizations of Oregon to see how they, too, considered suffrage and the prohibition of alcohol inseparable. Finally, I will look at the activist Abigail Scott Duniway and the ways that her goal of unquestioned women's suffrage could not be separated from prohibition. The state of Oregon stands out as a case study into the interrelationship and efficacy of the women's suffrage and prohibition movements. There is a wealth of well-preserved activism intact to this day, exposing the incredible ways that these two ideologies conflicted and cooperated in this Pacific Northwest state. The women's suffrage and prohibition movements in Oregon presented both a logical and paradoxical way of interacting, but in the final perspective were intrinsically linked together through the people involved and their outspoken beliefs.

The route that I am taking on this paper requires the movements of the prohibition and women's suffrage in Oregon to be dealt with together in regards to their effect on each other, making this a unique take from a historiographic perspective. The work that has been done on the women's suffrage movement mostly interprets the history in an isolated perspective, such as the M.A. thesis, *Woman Suffrage in Oregon* by Martha Frances Montague.<sup>2</sup> Authors such as Jack S. Blocker Jr. in his article, "Separate Paths: Suffragists and the Women's Temperance Crusade," and Suzanne M. Marilley in hers, "Frances Willard and the Feminism of Fear," pursue their topics from a gender studies

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<sup>2</sup> Martha Frances Montague, *Woman Suffrage in Oregon*, Thesis M.A., University of Oregon 1930, Robert Carleton Clark Papers, Special Collections, Knight Library, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon.

perspective.<sup>3</sup> Eileen McDonagh and H. Douglas Price show nationwide statistics on the women's suffrage movement in their article, "Woman Suffrage in the Progressive Era: Patterns of Opposition and Support in Referenda Voting, 1910-1918." *Rebel for Rights* by Ruth Barnes Moynihan provided the bulk of material on Abigail Scott Duniway in an artful biography.<sup>4</sup> Ann-Marie E. Szymanski's book, *Pathways to Prohibition*, contains the most thoroughly detailed account of the prohibition movement that I have found.<sup>5</sup> It chronicles the arising of the prohibition nationally, particularly focusing on the political developments nationwide, though not at all focusing on the women's suffrage movement. My work will be a combination of these fields of study in order to find correlations between them with a focus on Oregon.

The WCTU epitomized the marriage of suffrage and prohibition ideals within the goals of one nationwide organization. Its influence was felt significantly in the state of Oregon. This organization's rise to prominence during the later half of the nineteenth century traces the success and failure of women's suffrage and prohibition in American history. The WCTU pioneered these ideals as the first major women-led political organization.<sup>6</sup> The national WCTU was formally founded in November 1874 as an offshoot of temperance movements in the Midwest of the United States. These temperance crusaders, reacting to the evils of liquor in their households and communities,

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<sup>3</sup> Jack S. Blocker, Jr., "Separate Paths: Suffragists and the Women's Temperance Crusade," *Signs*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (Spring, 1985); Suzanne M. Marilley, "Frances Willard and the Feminism of Fear," *Feminist Studies* Vol. 19, No. 1 (Spring, 1993).

<sup>4</sup> Eileen L. McDonagh and H. Douglas Price, "Woman Suffrage in the Progressive Era: Patterns of Opposition and Support in Referenda Voting, 1910-1918," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 79, No. 2 (June, 1985); Ruth Barnes Moynihan, *Rebel for Rights: Abigail Scott Duniway*, (Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1983).

<sup>5</sup> Ann-Marie E. Szymanski, *Pathways to Prohibition* (London: Duke University Press, 2003).

<sup>6</sup> Marilley, "Frances Willard," 123

went to local saloons and kneeled outside, praying for the end of alcohol's grasp on American society.<sup>7</sup> The WCTU's path to national influence started out with a simple credo, penned in 1879 by the organization's leader during its earlier years, Frances Willard, "For God, for Home, for Native Land."<sup>8</sup> This motto showed the early goals and future aspirations of this burgeoning movement.

The WCTU had its most profound roots amongst devout followers of the Christian faith, finding its adamant support in churches nationwide for the organization's moral purity crusade.<sup>9</sup> The heavily religious element of the organization expressed its views through its staunch support of temperance. However, what the WCTU considered temperance was something far greater than what many others at the time considered to be so. Colloquial speaking of temperance at the time was split between the radical viewpoint of the WCTU and the moderate opinions of others. The moderate supporters of temperance believed it should be a personal and non-intrusive restraint of the consumption of liquor, while not necessarily eliminating intake altogether.<sup>10</sup> On the other end, far beyond simply regulating alcohol consumption to a non-excessive level, the WCTU believed that complete temperance should extend to every individual, with

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<sup>7</sup> James A. Morone, *Hellfire Nation* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2003), 289. Further reference abb. as Morone, *Hellfire Nation*.

<sup>8</sup> Marilley, "Frances Willard," 131.

<sup>9</sup> Marilley, "Frances Willard," 135.

<sup>10</sup> J.A. Homan, *Prohibition, The Enemy of Temperance* (Cincinnati, Ohio: The Christian Liberty Bureau, 1910), 35. Further abbrev. as Homan, *Enemy of Temperance*.

everyone refusing the vice of alcohol in their life at all times.<sup>11</sup> Of course, the WCTU knew all too well of those who called themselves pro-temperance, but imbibed within the privacy of their homes. For the temperance crusaders to expect all to give up drinking of their own prerogative, even those who did so casually, was simply unrealistic. The WCTU was thus forced to consider governmental enforcement as the best course of action to achieve nationwide temperance, so that “not one legalized door to HELL will be opened with the saloon sign above its gaping mouth.”<sup>12</sup>

Unfortunately for the WCTU’s plans to eliminate liquor and liquor consumption, women’s participation in governance during the 1800s was severely restricted, without the right to vote. At first, the WCTU did not wish to seek women’s suffrage legislation because it viewed the extension of suffrage to women as “contrary to true womanhood.”<sup>13</sup> It was not long before the WCTU, known for bull-headedly adhering to its principles, changed its position on the right of women to vote. The WCTU realized that the quickest route towards moral purity and temperance would logically be for them, as the first major women’s political organization, to enfranchise themselves and other women, to vote.<sup>14</sup> Through a nationally organized but locally independent set of movements, the WCTU set about achieving women’s suffrage so that the dream of the prohibition of alcohol could be actualized.

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<sup>11</sup> Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, *President’s Address / Oregon W.C.T.U. Convention*, speech by Lucia H.F. Additon in Eugene, OR, Oct 15, 1907 (Newberg, OR: Oregon WCTU, 1907). Further abbrev. as WCTU, *President’s Address*.

<sup>12</sup> WCTU, *President’s Address*, speech by Ada Wallace Unruh in Salem, OR, Oct. 11-14, 1910.

<sup>13</sup> Moynihan, *Rebel for Rights*, 131.

<sup>14</sup> Blocker, “Separate Paths,” 475.

The WCTU pursued an aggressive course of action that was full of powerful symbolism to achieve its two primary goals of the prohibition of alcohol and women's suffrage. The organization used the symbol of woman as the "Mother" to hearken towards a kind of moral superiority of women over men.<sup>15</sup> In its writings and speeches, the WCTU continually used the mantra of "Home Protection!" as a rallying cry for disenfranchised women throughout the country.<sup>16</sup> The organization also further combated the notion of women as the weaker sex, and could thus be attributed to pioneering an early budding of American feminist movements.

Frances Willard, the leader of the WCTU, often portrayed the man as the morally degenerate drunkard and the woman as the hero, forced to shoulder the responsibility of running a household.<sup>17</sup> The power of the WCTU to enact legislation that could benefit both women's suffrage and the prohibition was apparent in its single-minded determination to see its goals through. Whether it be protecting a woman's home from the injustice of a lecherous, drinking husband, or from the lack of political sway that women felt during the late nineteenth century, the symbol of the Home was a powerful one, especially for American women who were destitute in political sway.

The revolutionary aspect of the WCTU was its ability to enfranchise and mobilize women, mostly middle and upper-class, into influential positions in United States society to gain women's suffrage rights and reform of liquor laws. The WCTU did this by relating its political goals with the everyday strife of women in the nineteenth century. This gave each member of the organization her own motive for participation, such as

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<sup>15</sup> Marilley, "Frances Willard," 126.

<sup>16</sup> Marilley, "Frances Willard," 125.

<sup>17</sup> Marilley, "Frances Willard," 139.

Elisabeth Eggert from Portland, Oregon who said “although I have but recently become a member of the WCTU, I have been in lifelong sympathy with every measure for the annihilation of the liquor traffic.” Often, women such as Elisabeth, with personal animus towards the atrocities they perceived in the liquor traffic had these ideas actualized not through political or media programming, but through their own upbringing: “instilled in me by a mother who prayed and worked for that end [prohibition], and a father who hated it in all its hideous forms.”<sup>18</sup> Through its appeal to the experiences of women in the 1800s, a gravely underrepresented group of people in the politics and social life of America, the WCTU’s nationwide popularity grew.

The leverage that women gained on the issue of prohibition and suffrage during the late 1800s was undeniable: “It should be noted that [the WCTU] managed to persuade over 250,000 men to vote for its national candidates at its peak (1886-92), while the WCTU could only claim about 150,000 members in this period.”<sup>19</sup> The WCTU’s success at jumpstarting the prohibition and women’s suffrage movements had been nothing short of extraordinary, even before it began to establish itself in the Pacific Northwest state of Oregon.

In the year of 1883, the by-then renowned members of the WCTU had finally established a national chapter in Oregon and carved out an influential niche in the state’s realm of pioneer politics, bringing their intemperate passion for the temperance and women’s suffrage movements from the East. Even before the WCTU arrived in the Pacific Northwest, the movements of women’s suffrage and the prohibition had long

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<sup>18</sup> Elisabeth Eggert to Abigail Scott Duniway, October 1, 1914, Box 1, Folder 28, Abigail Scott Duniway Papers, 1834-1915, Special Collections, Knight Library, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon.

<sup>19</sup> Szymanski, *Pathways to Prohibition*, 42.



been inexorably drawn together. Once established in Oregon, the organization fought hard to see its goals through in a multitude of ways, during its heyday of prominence in the late nineteenth century. The first Oregon chapter was led by Elisabeth A.P. White who had “imbibed rigorous temperance views from her parents” and had been personally appointed by Frances Willard to be the Representative of Oregon and the Vice President of the greater WCTU organization.<sup>20</sup>

The WCTU implemented effective and highly opinionated programs at schools to educate children and families about the dangers of drinking. Children received WCTU regulated instruction in Sunday school and chanted proudly “Tremble, King Alcohol, for we shall grow up.”<sup>21</sup> In a report by Mrs. Kern of the WCTU, she said to “let every woman use her ballot at the school meetings to secure the election of school directors who [enforce the] law relating to instruction regarding the effects of alcohol on the human system.”<sup>22</sup> The WCTU encouraged women to vote at school elections in order to show their interest in political matters, thereby encouraging women’s suffrage interest and furthering the organization’s political causes in education.<sup>23</sup> By tying the suffrage and prohibition movements together, the organization could often make gains on one front by garnering more support for the other.

The WCTU’s ultimate goal was to seek a constitutional amendment in order to ban the traffic and consumption of alcohol once and for all. This was not a goal that the

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<sup>20</sup> Lucia H. Faxon Additon, *Twenty Eventful Years of the Oregon Woman's Christian Temperance Union, 1880-1900. Statistical, Historical and Biographical. Portraits of Prominent Pioneer Workers* (Portland, OR: Gotshall Printing Company, 1904), 87.

<sup>21</sup> WCTU, *President's Address*, speech by Ada Wallace Unruh in Salem, OR, Oct. 11-14, 1910.

<sup>22</sup> Additon, *20 Eventful Years*, 34.

<sup>23</sup> Montague, *WS in O*, 28.

WCTU would immediately or ever fully reach, but it managed to secure local option laws throughout many counties in Oregon and the rest of the United States, making specific areas legally dry within their boundaries.<sup>24</sup> By 1906, the list of dry counties in Oregon included Linn, Benton, Lincoln, Lane, Tillamook, Sherman, Yamhill and Wallowa.<sup>25</sup> While the WCTU did not secure the right to vote for women in Oregon until 1912, it was a tremendous influence in swaying votes more favorably towards the cause each election year.<sup>26</sup> Throughout the 1880s, the WCTU's participation in the political process was most visible, with ample cooperation from the Oregon Woman Suffrage Association.<sup>27</sup> But most of all, its great success was giving women the voice that they had been deprived of through all the years of political and domestic subjugation to the whims of men.

Once the WCTU swept the Northwest, the women's suffrage and temperance movements came to be closely associated with one another, mostly because the ratification of women's suffrage would almost certainly spell the imminent arrival of prohibition with newly enfranchised women following the gospel of the WCTU. During the late 1800s, women's suffrage and prohibition of alcohol inched seemingly closer every year, yet never quite arrived.<sup>28</sup> Would the arrival of the movements have come earlier had they not been bred together under the watchful gaze of the WCTU? For better or for worse in furthering the legitimacy of its goals, the WCTU was always clear as to

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<sup>24</sup> Szymanski, *Pathways to Prohibition*, 101.

<sup>25</sup> WCTU, *President's Address*, speech by Lucia H.F. Additon, Newberg, OR, Oct. 1-4 1906,

<sup>26</sup> Montague, *WS in O*, 19.

<sup>27</sup> Montague, *WS in O*, 18.

<sup>28</sup> Montague, *WS in O*, 25-26.

the inseparable nature of prohibition and women's suffrage. The WCTU also managed to simultaneously alienate many potential constituents who did not agree with its assertions.<sup>29</sup>

In the late 1800s, the WCTU had created a vast empire in Oregon on a crusade to purify the ethics of humanity by first attaining voting rights for women then using those votes to sway the government towards a national prohibition.<sup>30</sup> The question still remains today as to whether the WCTU overstretched its efforts and credibility in melding these two individual movements, women's suffrage and prohibition, into the body of one indivisible goal, along with the many other ideas it championed along its quest for national purity. Through its underlying stubborn and disparaging nature, the organization made many enemies who were as zealous as its supporters along the windy route towards suffrage and prohibition.<sup>31</sup> The WCTU was the original group to conceptualize women's suffrage and the prohibition of alcohol as being mutually dependent, and it castigated those who would say otherwise. However, the inherently controversial nature of the WCTU made attempts to pass both women's suffrage and prohibition legislation not nearly as expedient as hoped and eventually led to the organization's demise.

The WCTU adamantly preached that anyone who stood against the enfranchisement of suffrage to women was morally abject by supporting "the marauding hordes of the saloon" instead of liberty for all.<sup>32</sup> Very similarly, anybody who stood against the prohibition of alcohol, regardless of what reason they had for doing, was

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<sup>29</sup> WCTU, *President's Address*, speech by Lucia H.F. Additon in Eugene, OR, Oct 15<sup>th</sup>, 1907.

<sup>30</sup> Montague, *WS in O*, 26.

<sup>31</sup> WCTU, *President's Address*, speech by Ada Wallace Unruh, Corvallis, OR, Sep. 23-26, 1913.

<sup>32</sup> WCTU, *President's Address*, speech by Ada Wallace Unruh, Salem, OR, Oct. 11-14, 1910.

quickly to be chastised as being in the pocket of the liquor men, so responsible for the downfall of Western morality. This polarized view showed how the nature of the WCTU was divisive instead of cooperative with other people and groups. Was this controversial nature and grouping of movements the best way to pursue its goals? The divisive nature of the WCTU and the combination of women's suffrage and prohibition together offended many who might otherwise have supported one movement or the other had they been presented in a more isolated manner.

The general population of Oregon had vastly differing views on the state's inherent mixture of the women's suffrage and prohibition movements because of the involvement of the WCTU. In a 1904 report by the WCTU, an interesting stone epitaph was noted that read "died... a saloon... nagged to death by women."<sup>33</sup> There was clearly a line bitterly drawn in the sand between the sexes about prohibition, and women's suffrage was to be the lynchpin in the argument. Abigail Scott Duniway, who will be studied in greater depth later on, gave the most resonant statement regarding the WCTU's use of women's suffrage to gain prohibition. Duniway claimed that "every woman who says, 'Give us the ballot, and we'll put down your whiskey!' only arouses men to say by their votes, 'Very well, we won't give you the ballot... if you are going to use it as a whip over us.'"<sup>34</sup> Because women sought the vote from men, it could be viewed as a very poor move for the women's suffrage supporters to align themselves with prohibition, a cause that would be unpopular for a lot of the male voters of America.

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<sup>33</sup> Additon, *20 Eventful Years*, 61.

<sup>34</sup> Moore, Mary Alice and Donald E. Moore, *More Power Than We Knew: The League of Women Voters in Oregon, 1920-1995*, (Salem, OR: League of Women Voters of Oregon, 1995), 11. Further abbrev. as Moore/Moore, *More Power*.

Outspoken literature on the disadvantages of women's suffrage is very difficult to find, but many individuals publicly balked at the idea of national prohibition. Rev J.A. Homan saw it as an infringement on civil liberty in that "compulsory abstinence is without any scriptural sanction, [while] gospel temperance, or the method of moral suasion, has it in fullest measure."<sup>35</sup> These people believed that self-control was the key to health and happiness. Rev. J.A. Homan believed that "it will be universally conceded that one of these laws of Nature is that every man may eat or drink whatever he pleases," and that "so long as he does not injure himself thereby, or interfere with rights of others" he should be entitled to his God-given rights without government interference.<sup>36</sup>

Still, other men were incensed at the line that prohibition walked between the law and enforcement of religious morality, which may have discouraged them from supporting the related women's suffrage movement. One man named George Harrison wrote a pamphlet in which he went so far as to call it an "idolatry of the grossest character; that the ballot box is the God of millions of benighted Christians [sic] today," who through their vote for the moralizing agent of the prohibition "permitted the ballot box to invade the spiritual spheres of their life."<sup>37</sup> The organization known as The Oregon Taxpayers and Wage Earners' League, which identified itself as a "statewide temperance (not prohibition) organization," stood against the WCTU's goal of broad-sweeping prohibition because it feared losing the civil liberties of the individual.<sup>38</sup> It is interesting

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<sup>35</sup> Homan, *Enemy of Temperance*, IX.

<sup>36</sup> Homan, *Enemy of Temperance*, XI.

<sup>37</sup> "A Challenge to Discuss The Other Side of the Liquor Question," Box 1, Folder 21, A.S.D. Papers.

<sup>38</sup> A definition of the Tax Taxpayers and Wage Earner's League, Box 1, Folder 24, A.S.D. Papers.

to note that these different factions, who all saw some underlying fallacy in the WCTU's methods, make no mention of any opposition to women's suffrage. Instead, it is the prohibition movement that gives us concrete evidence towards their opposition to the WCTU's methods. It is clear though, that people could not make a judgment about one movement without considering its effect on the passage of the other.

Due to the clear path leading from women's suffrage to prohibition, the people who stood the most to lose by passing a women's suffrage law in Oregon were the liquor manufacturers and saloon owners, pejoratively referred to as the "liquor men."<sup>39</sup> As far as the WCTU was concerned, these people were the true scourge of the nation who profited from the sale of poison to the masses.<sup>40</sup> During a break from doing some particularly taxing work on this project, I opted for a drink of cream soda. Upon absent-mindedly reading the label on the neck of the bottle of Henry Weinhard's Cream Soda, a company that got its start in Hood River, Oregon in 1856, I came upon this product statement: "We proudly present this classic American recipe... Originally introduced during prohibition, [this soda] provided a refreshing alternative for our beer-drinking loyalists both during and after the Ignoble Experiment of the early [twentieth] century." It is not all that surprising that a company would be adverse to its product being taken away, as its survival depended on the sale of this product. What *was* intriguing was to find that Henry Weinhard's was against more than just the prohibition of alcohol.

According to the front page of *The Evening Telegram* of June 1, 1906, which was dedicated to heralding the upcoming June 4<sup>th</sup> election in which women's suffrage was

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<sup>39</sup> WCTU, *President's Address*, speech by Henrietta Brown in Portland, OR, Oct. 6-9, 1908.

<sup>40</sup> WCTU, *President's Address*, speech by Ada Wallace Unruh in Salem, OR, Oct. 11-14, 1910.

thought likely to become a reality in Oregon; Henry Weinhard's brewing company was listed in the column of those who were "Opponents of Progress," along with other local breweries such as Star, North Pacific, Enterprise and Mt. Hood.<sup>41</sup> The article contains an exhaustive list of those who opposed women's suffrage: "corporate interests, liquor organizations, *selfish* society beings, *indifferent* people and *unscrupulous* politicians."<sup>42</sup> Clearly, those who defended their business issues against prohibition were maligned by women's suffrage reporters. Even more striking was how the brewers, saloon owners and liquor retailers were forced to take a stand against women's suffrage in order to defend their business interests from being outlawed. They did this by banding together behind the Brewers' and Wholesale Liquor Dealers' Association located in Portland. This organization reportedly cast votes to spoil Oregon women's suffrage legislation in order to prevent further anti-liquor legislation.<sup>43</sup>

It was all too clear in the year 1906 that while many were not fond of the relationship of women's suffrage and the prohibition, the movements were practically running on a joint ticket. The women's suffrage law lost by a more significant margin in 1906, of 10,000 votes, when it had much more publicity and optimism, than it had in the quieter year of 1900, when it only lost by 2,000 votes.<sup>44</sup> Could it have been the negativity from the two movements being so closely associated with each other?

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<sup>41</sup> "Opponents of Progress," *The Evening Telegram*, July 1, 1906, Box 1, Folder 3, A.S.D. Papers.

<sup>42</sup> "Favorable/Opposed to Equal Suffrage," *The Evening Telegram*, July 1, 1906, Box 1, Folder 3, A.S.D. Papers.

<sup>43</sup> "A Dangerous and Degrading Combine," *The Evening Telegram*, July 1, 1906, Box 1, Folder 3, A.S.D. Papers.

<sup>44</sup> "What Defeated Woman Suffrage," *The Oregonian*, 1906, Box 1, Folder 3, A.S.D. Papers.

It is very possible that had the women's suffrage and the prohibition movements been insulated from one another, they would not have been met with such derision in certain circles. The militancy of the WCTU discouraged many from associating with them throughout its existence, and in 1895 they were excluded from their previously held positions in churches throughout Oregon, ironically eliminating the very grassroots support that the WCTU had originally built upon.<sup>45</sup> The organization lost the support of churches by pushing ideals that were simply too radical for the more moderate Christian attendees and many people found the WCTU's interpretation of the Christian faith as a vehicle for political crusade grossly misconstrued.<sup>46</sup>

Yet for all the negative campaigning and mudslinging that the WCTU engaged in through their long run in Oregon politics, it still brought passion and education to the fields of women's suffrage and the prohibition that may never have otherwise been seen.<sup>47</sup> In contrast to those that were against women's suffrage or prohibition on the basis of them being tied together, there were still many who supported them. For every one with a "corporate interest" there was a "wage earning woman." For every "selfish society being" there was a "home guardian."<sup>48</sup> Shortly before the 1906 election, George Chamberlain, the governor of Oregon, gave a speech at the convention of the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) in Portland and related women's suffrage to the archetype of the mother figure which had been propagated by Frances

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<sup>45</sup> Montague, *WS in O*, 29.

<sup>46</sup> Marilley, "Frances Willard," 132.

<sup>47</sup> Moynihan, *Rebel for Rights*, 142.

<sup>48</sup> "Favorable/Opposed to Equal Suffrage," *The Evening Telegram*, July 1, 1906, Box 1, Folder 3, A.S.D. Papers.



Willard years earlier. In his speech, Chamberlain said that “it is strange that the mother who is capable of caring for the welfare of a child in the home cannot do so in the state.”<sup>49</sup> Many Oregonians attributed an innate morality to women and believed that it should be brought to the political sphere.

Many who supported the WCTU and its crusade to achieve prohibition and women’s suffrage provided pragmatic reasons for doing so. The Anti-Saloon League, an Ohio-based organization that was part of the second generation of temperance reformers, published an annual book stating what changes and progress had been made on the prohibition movement. While strongest in the Midwest, the league did find its way into Oregon politics. The Anti-Saloon League had a penchant for crunching the liquor problem down to economic numbers.<sup>50</sup>

In the Anti-Saloon League’s 1912 year book, without so much as mentioning the women’s suffrage movement amongst its multitudes of statistics, it claims the total amount of money spent on alcoholic beverages in America in the census year of 1910 to be \$2,500,000,000.<sup>51</sup> It implies that the huge drink bill that Americans put on their tab each year should be used for more charitable and economically productive uses.<sup>52</sup> These calculations bring numbers to an otherwise primarily moralistic movement. The Anti-Saloon League was a group made up of men, and as so, did not step on the feet of the WCTU and its pursuit of women’s suffrage. In this way it was perhaps the great

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<sup>49</sup> “Opinions of Oregonians,” *The Evening Telegram*, July 1, 1906, Box 1, Folder 3, A.S.D. Papers.

<sup>50</sup> Cherrington, Ernest H. *The Anti-Saloon League Year Book*. Westerville, Ohio: The American Issue Press, 1912, 153. Further abbrev. as Cherrington, *ASL Year Book 1912*.

<sup>51</sup> Cherrington, *ASL Year Book 1912*, 33.

<sup>52</sup> Cherrington, *ASL Year Book 1912*, 34.

exception to the interrelationship of women's suffrage and prohibition in Oregon, most likely because of the Anti-Saloon League having such a strong base in Ohio which kept it nationally unified, as opposed to such vast local disparity in hierarchy seen in the WCTU.

From the WCTU's arrival in Oregon in 1883 up to the passing of the prohibition law in 1914, the organization strayed little from its original formula, regardless of public opinion. The WCTU's melding of the prohibition and women's suffrage was detestable to many, such as the everything-in-moderation temperance supporters, The Oregon Taxpayers and Wage Earners' League, those in the liquor brewing and retail industry and many of those not associated with any organization. To others, such as the people who were sympathetic to one or the other cause, and not averse to them combined, the WCTU was either a salvation or, at the worst, a novel and outdated complement to their views. There was a third major viewpoint on the issue of women's suffrage and prohibition, and that was illustrated by Abigail Scott Duniway.

The controversial figure Abigail Scott Duniway was a, if not *the*, forerunner of the women's suffrage movement in Oregon, and a constant thorn in the side of prohibition agitators. Despite her success and determination in achieving women's suffrage throughout her long life, she would struggle with the blueprint that the WCTU laid out in Oregon that made the movements fundamentally inseparable in Oregon's consciousness. Abigail Scott Duniway, whose maiden name was Abigail Jane Scott, was born in the sparsely populated Tazewell County, Illinois on October 22, 1834. She immigrated to Oregon with her family on the infamous Oregon Trail in 1852, in that classic American search for prosperity in the West. Once in Oregon, Abigail married a

man named Ben Duniway and entered a very formative period in her life.<sup>53</sup> She settled down with her husband on a farm in Yamhill County.<sup>54</sup>

During her time in Yamhill, Abigail Scott Duniway began to develop her ideas on women's rights and suffrage. Her life on the farm was filled with great adversity; she admitted that "my labors on that farm became an added burden as our resources grew."<sup>55</sup> These hardships culminated with the farm being sold, and her husband being grievously wounded and incapacitated in an accident. Duniway started a millinery business and soon became interested in equal rights for women, becoming involved in the early stages of the Oregon Equal Suffrage Association during the 1870's. This was in part due to her highly motivated personality but also because of the tough circumstances she grew up in and similar ones that she saw so many other women silently accept. In 1870, she started the highly influential newspaper, *The New Northwest*, dedicated to increasing awareness of the women's suffrage movement. Duniway received great amounts of help from her brother, Harvey Scott, in founding the publication and refining her journalistic skills. One of her greatest achievements was organizing the State Equal Suffrage Association under the tutelage and aide of renowned activist Susan B. Anthony.<sup>56</sup> By the 1870s, Duniway's importance in the realm of the women's suffrage movement in Oregon was already sealed, but would by no means end there.

Abigail Scott Duniway's work with the women's suffrage movement was coupled with a lifelong obsession with civil liberties. Never one to rest on her laurels, she became

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<sup>53</sup> Moynihan, *Rebel for Rights*, 1, 30, 53.

<sup>54</sup> Duniway, *Path Breaking*, 10.

<sup>55</sup> Duniway, *Path Breaking*, 13.

<sup>56</sup> Duniway, *Path Breaking*, 15-16, 28, 30, 40, 42, 57.

aware of a movement that she saw as an affront to her personal beliefs: the prohibition of alcohol. Though she had grown up pro-temperance, she felt that government-mandated prohibition was tyrannical. Instead, she believed that prohibition was something to be sought as a personal moral goal, much like the moderate temperance reformers believed.<sup>57</sup> Duniway related her views on temperance to her youth, saying “I had become interested in the temperance question in childhood,” and she believed that “intemperance is a disease and should be treated as such” like any other ailment to strike humanity.<sup>58</sup> She believed, based upon her pioneer upbringing, that everybody was responsible for themselves.

The WCTU’s arrival in Oregon, and subsequent adoption of the women’s suffrage movement with its prohibition goals set off sparks in the fiery Duniway, who had already had some high-profile scuffles with church affiliated organizations, such as calling their institutionalized beliefs “puffed up churchanity.” Duniway’s one solid praise of the WCTU was for its early leader, Frances Willard, who she believed had some grit to her through her ardent support of women’s suffrage.<sup>59</sup> Duniway realized that with the organization’s influence came prohibition. No matter how comfortable she got with the WCTU, she would disagree on this key point which was by then well tied in with the women’s suffrage cause in Oregon.

During the WCTU’s growth in Oregon during the late 1870s and 1880s, Abigail Scott Duniway strove with all her might to pry her women’s suffrage movement apart

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<sup>57</sup> Moynihan, *Rebel for Rights*, 143.

<sup>58</sup> Duniway, *Path Breaking*, 62.

<sup>59</sup> Moynihan, *Rebel for Rights*, 132, 142.

from the prohibition. While she held many preconceived notions on the potential disasters of a government-mandated temperance reform, she felt the greatest affront was that the WCTU betrayed the women's suffrage movement by tying the two together. She didn't want women's suffrage to be "the tail of the prohibition kite," or in other words, the means to an end.<sup>60</sup> She sincerely believed that women's suffrage was a cause that was so fundamental to American liberty that to muddle it with another issue like prohibition as the WCTU did, was pure lunacy.

Duniway's opposition to prohibition on the basis of her belief in freedom and self-responsibility explained her frustration at prohibition's newfound relationship with women's suffrage. Her view on how the two matters should see legislation was vastly different than the WCTU's. As she explained, "I will say, that I am opposed to two kinds of prohibition," already differing from the WCTU's one type of prohibition. She explained the two types of prohibition as she saw it: "One of these would prohibit woman from the use of her right to vote" while the other "would prohibit a man's right to sell a sober man a drink of liquor if he should want to buy."<sup>61</sup> She looked at both issues in terms of their effects on civil liberty. For one to be anti-women's suffrage was to negate a fundamental right as an American, and for one to be pro-prohibition was to do the same: restrict freedom. In her mind, the WCTU sought women's suffrage not to increase freedom, but to decrease it through prohibition legislation.

Due to the harsh ideological divide between Duniway and the WCTU, their arguments were legendary during their time and added both energy and lethargy to the women's suffrage and prohibition movements. Oftentimes, these episodes would play

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<sup>60</sup> Moynihan, *Rebel for Rights*, 141.

<sup>61</sup> Duniway, *Path Breaking*, 100.

out with Abigail Scott Duniway standing up for her beliefs, calling the WCTU women a variety of derogatory terms.<sup>62</sup> She did this against an equally stubborn and immovable force that happened to possess national influence. For her refusal to support prohibition, the WCTU took the route most often taken against the enemies of its goals, accusing her of being under control of the liquor men “in the way [she was] permitting [her] influence to be exploited for the benefit of this appalling source of misery and crime.”<sup>63</sup>

The truly intriguing part of the life of Abigail Scott Duniway was how she was in nobody’s pocket regarding her views on prohibition and women’s suffrage. She would fight her entire adult life from the time the WCTU arrived in Oregon until her death, to see the women’s suffrage movement separated from the prohibition movement.<sup>64</sup> By the 1880s, having still not passed any considerable legislation for women’s suffrage in Oregon, Duniway was distraught. She decided to go on a sabbatical to Idaho to pursue other work and calm down from the heated exchanges with the WCTU, during which little activity occurred in the realm of women’s suffrage.<sup>65</sup>

After being drawn back into Oregon in 1894, Abigail Scott Duniway found a women’s suffrage movement in disarray. Both Duniway and the WCTU continued along their same paths, albeit with considerably less tension after having had several years to mend and forget their differences.<sup>66</sup> In the final perspective, the WCTU wanted to use

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<sup>62</sup> Moynihan, *Rebel for Rights*, 184.

<sup>63</sup> Elisabeth Eggert to Abigail Scott Duniway, October 1, 1914, Box 1, Folder 28, A.S.D. Papers.

<sup>64</sup> Duniway, *Path Breaking*, 204.

<sup>65</sup> Duniway, *Path Breaking*, 130; Montague, *WS in O*, 26.

<sup>66</sup> Montague, *WS in O*, 26.

women's suffrage as a tool to achieve the prohibition of alcohol. Abigail Scott Duniway believed that women's suffrage was an inalienable right that should set a precedent for freedom in America and should be respected for its own sake, without the burden of other issues.

Fortunately for the women's suffrage movement, there was enough begrudging acceptance of the prohibition cause that it did not deter suffrage's eventual passing. In spite of the many opponents of the movements, enough men sympathetic to the cause flocked to the polls and finally passed a referendum giving full suffrage to women in 1912, ahead of the vast majority of states in the Union. Not long after the enfranchisement of women, statewide prohibition was passed in Oregon in 1914, confirming the evidence towards their fundamental linkage.<sup>67</sup> Abigail Scott Duniway lived to the age of 81 and not long before her passing on, she was able to see her life's joy and disappointment, respectively, through the passage of the inseparable women's suffrage and prohibition movements in Oregon.<sup>68</sup>

The underlying tension between those who favored the blending of women's suffrage and the prohibition, and those who wanted to separate them created a unique environment in Oregon that was particularly suited towards their achievement. Each faction fought with all their might to see their ideas through and the opposing group's dismissed. The words written by people during this formative period in American history, along with the two-year difference between the passing of women's suffrage and the passing of the prohibition, proves the ultimately inseparable nature of the two movements.

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<sup>67</sup> McDonagh/Price, "WS in Prog Era," 417.

<sup>68</sup> Moynihan, *Rebel for Rights*, 218.

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