

# Women's Suffrage Research at the Bridgeport History Center



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## Conducting Women's Suffrage Research the Bridgeport History Center

Much of Connecticut's relationship with the right for women to vote was conducted through the Connecticut Woman Suffrage Association, or the CWSA. The organization worked both locally and nationally to effect change, and women from all over the state were active and involved with the effort. The CWSA was led by women, published material in favor of their goals, and encouraged active involvement. Their [organization's archives](#) are held at the Connecticut State Library.

While the Bridgeport History Center does not have an extensive collection of personal papers related to the women's suffrage movement, it does have some archival resources that are specific to Bridgeport and the surrounding area. Specific individuals are the easiest to research at the Bridgeport History Center.

Major movement figures that can be found here at the Bridgeport History Center include Bridgeport Maude Hincks who served as president of the organization from 1911-1913. She remained heavily involved within it after her term ended. Fellow Bridgeporter Elsie Hill was arrested in Washington, D.C. for protesting at the capitol.

## Archival sources

*BHC-ARC 000606, Women's suffrage material* – While not comprehensive in any way, this small archival assemblage, the donation of one Mrs. Mizer, contains pamphlets, newsletters, and literature related to the movement, including several items from the 1870s-1890s advocating for women. The material is as follows

- *The Connecticut Idea* by Katherine Ludington, c. 1918-1919 [pamphlet published by National Woman Suffrage Publishing Company]
- *The Early History of the Ballot in Connecticut* by Simeon E. Baldwin, 1890
- *Venal Connecticut Politics*, 1899
- *To the Women Citizens of Connecticut* [campaign literature by the Democratic Party]
- *Party Machinery: The causes and Convention System of Connecticut*, 1920 [published by CWSA meant to educate voters about how the system worked]
- *Thomas J. Spellacy, Democratic Nominee for Governor* [campaign literature]
- *Correspondence Course in Citizenship for Women* [undated, meant to educate voters about how system worked]
- *Legal Disabilities of Married Women in Connecticut* by George A. Hickox, 1871 [published by CWSA]
- [The Suffrage News Bulletin](#) for April 1920, December 1919, December 1920
- *Call to 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of CWSA at Bridgeport, Hotel Stratfield*, November 12-14, 1919
- Letter to CWSA members regarding movement and progress of goals, August 20, 1920 and undated

- The Annual Convention of the Fairfield County Woman Suffrage Association, June 14, 1920 [handbill]
- *How our Nation Spends Its Income, 1920* [handbill from Boston League of Women Votes]
- "Suff Rally in Park City was Real Success" [newspaper clipping from Sunday Herald, January 25, 1920]

*BHC-MSS 0068 Records of the League of Women Voters of Bridgeport* relate to later efforts of the suffrage movement, with the records here covering the 1950s-1970s. However, there is material dedicated to honoring the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of winning the right to vote, and thus provides interesting insight into how previous anniversaries were commemorated.

### **Photographs**

The Bridgeport History Center has scant few images relating to the Womens Suffrage movement in Connecticut. It does have a single photograph of Maude Hincks in 1918, in action.

### **Newspaper clippings**

*Connecticut, Women's suffrage* contains selected newspaper articles regarding women's suffrage in Connecticut, with an emphasis on Bridgeport and Fairfield County.

[Resident pushed for women's right to vote](#) from the Bridgeport Post written by Mary K. Witkowski in 1996 features an article regarding Maude Hincks.

### **Biographical files**

Biographical files are curated folders for major local figures, and are organized by both individuals and by family names.

*Hincks family* – Includes biographical clippings on Maude Hincks

*Hill family* – Includes biographical clippings about Elsie Hill and her arrest in Washington, DC during the protests that took place from 1917-1919.

### **Newspapers**

In addition to curated newspaper clippings in both the biographical files and the newspaper files, the Bridgeport History Center can offer local newspapers available on microfilm that contain contemporaneous reporting. There is no indexing for the local papers, but researcher can use dates for salient events, etc., to look for coverage.

- The Evening Farmer/The Bridgeport Times/The Bridgeport Times Star available on [Chronicling America](#)
- The Bridgeport Standard
- The Bridgeport Post
- The Bridgeport Telegram
- Bridgeport Sunday Herald

In addition, The Hartford Courant is available at all CT public libraries through ResearchIT and is digitized and searchable. The Courant contains state-wide coverage.

### **Other resources**

[Biographical Database of NAWSA Suffragists, 1890-1920](#), contains biographies for major players in

the movement. This includes data on [Maude Hincks](#), [Katharine Ludington](#), as well as others. It is possible to search within the biographical data for both “Bridgeport” and “Connecticut”, and the search box is at the top of the page.

[Connecticut Women and the Women’s Suffrage Movement](#) on Teach It by Rebecca Furer contains lesson plans for instructing on this topic in the classroom.

[Connecticut and the 19th Amendment](#) on the National Parks Service website offers a wonderful overview of the movement in Connecticut.

[RG 101, Connecticut Woman Suffrage Association](#), Connecticut State Library represents the complete assemblage of records of the CWSA.

[Connecticut Suffrage Centennial](#) is the State of Connecticut’s website for celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

[The Alice Paul Institute](#) should also be visited.