

"SUSAN BROWNELL ANTHONY"

Susan Brownell Anthony was born February 20th, 1820 which sounds a very long time ago, but she lived into the 20th century and her untiring work for Women's Rights will be remembered forever in American history. I noticed in the paper <sup>(1958)</sup> last week the announcement of the death in California of Dame Emmiline Pankhurst. Both Miss Pankhurst and her mother were friends of Miss Anthony and worked for the Suffrage Movement in England as Susan did in America. So here was a co-worker of Miss Anthony's, who was born in 1820 living in America during these past years.

Susan Anthony's family were Quakers. They lived in a Quaker settlement in the Northern Berkshires before Susan was born and continued living there until she was ten years old. Her father, Daniel Anthony, had been given land by his father-in-law and lumber by his father. He built a home, ran a store in a corner of it and farmed his land; in 1822 built a mill - a textile mill, using a small brook for water power. The log building was thirty feet by forty feet and three and a half stories high, with twenty four power run looms. This was all the work of Daniel Anthony's own brain and hands. Susan writes in her Reminiscences that her father's mill was the first in South Adams - the start of the manufacturing town. Mill girls boarded at the Anthony's home - girls who worked from six A.M. until six P.M., sometimes longer with no holidays except Sundays. Perhaps Susan thought of them when she worked for Women's Rights and Labor Reforms.

There were, eventually seven children in the Anthony family, five girls and two boys. Their father's mill prospered so that he wished to expand the business and so moved to Battenville, New York, where he became partner of Judge McClean in a large and thriving cotton mill.

In Battenville, Mr. Anthony built a handsome brick house, large enough for his own family and several of his in-laws. Eventually a wing was added for school rooms, a teacher engaged and the Anthony children, children from nearby Quaker families and finally a few boarding students attended school there.

Mr. Anthony must have been a very good builder, since both the house in Adams and also the one in Battenville are still standing.

As the girls grew older they were sent to a Quaker school in Philadelphia and all the Anthony children received a good education. They were also taught thrift, housekeeping and cooking. Even when an old lady, Susan couldn't abide a poor housekeeper or cook.

After fifteen years of prosperity there was a severe depression. Mr. Anthony and his partner lost everything. The Anthony house, household goods, even clothes were sold to satisfy creditors. For several years following the family lived at Centerville. Mr. Anthony struggled to run one mill; they kept boarders; the girls taught school but finally the last mill was lost and the family was left with nothing.

Mrs. Anthony's brother, Samuel Read, came to their rescue. In those days a wife was not allowed to own anything; property, money, even children belonged to the husband. When Mrs. Anthony's parents died several years before Mr. Read claimed the entire estate as his own. By this means he saved his sister's share from her husband's creditors and was prepared to give up the money only for the purchase of a farm. He would hold the farm in his name until, by change in law, Lucy Anthony could hold it in her own name. This was one of the law reforms Susan worked for when she became interested in Women's Rights.

And so the family after much searching found a farm near Rochester. Three of the sisters were married, one brother, Daniel R., was working in Massachusetts, and Susan, Mary and Merritt moved with Mr. and Mrs. Anthony.

The family were very poor the first winter and for the first time the young people were allowed to sing in their home to take their minds off being hungry. However, Daniel went to teaching, he managed the farm well and eventually went into the insurance business and was quite prosperous.

Susan had taught in various country schools but in 1846 she was offered the post of head mistress of a Quaker school in Canajoharie at the salary one hundred and ten dollars a year out of which she paid forty-five dollars for board. For the first time, Susan could spend the money she earned on herself. She bought a fox muff for eight dollars, a dress for sixteen dollars and a mantilla for thirty dollars. Susan had given up Quaker dress, she had stopped using thee and thou and she sang on occasion but she was still a Quaker.

By the year 1850, Susan had taught school for fifteen years, had saved three hundred dollars, and was thirty years old. She returned to Rochester and helped run the farm while her father expanded the insurance business. Her first venture in public life was when she joined the Daughters of Temperance. While working with this organization she met Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who had made the first organized demand for Women's Rights. From that time on Miss Anthony and Mrs. Stanton became fast friends and co-workers in the struggle for recognition of the right of women to vote.

Susan in the year 1853 resolved to try Public Speaking and attended a teacher's convention. The question put before the delegates were "Why the Profession of Teaching is not respected as that of a Lawyer, Doctor or Minister." When Susan rose to speak on the subject, a motion had to be made as to whether she could be heard. Previously, the women at the convention had been allowed to listen to the men but never to speak.

The debate lasted over an hour. During that time Susan still stood as she was afraid to sit down lest she lose any chance of getting the floor again. Finally she was allowed to speak for several minutes and she sat down feeling that at least she had opened one forbidden door.

Before the Civil War the Anthony family were very active in the Underground Railroad, helping slaves on their way to Canada, as were many of the Quaker families in Rochester. The two Anthony sons went to Kansas with John Brown and both of them settled there. During these years Susan was working and making speeches for Temperance and Abolition but mostly for Women's Rights. In the year 1860, the law was passed concerning property and guardianship in New York State - a great step forward. Susan and Mrs. Stanton had been speaking in small towns in favor of the law and were elated when it passed.

After the Civil War the Women's Rights Group worked along with the Republicans to secure votes for the negro and votes for women, but the men soon made it plain that they considered the rights of the negro to come first and when the 14th and 15th Amendments were passed the Women's group found themselves back where they started in 1848.

Thru the next years Susan toured the West, speaking in large and small towns, always for Women's Rights. She charged admission to her lectures and made just enough to pay her expenses from town to town. In the year 1869 the Territory of Wyoming allowed women to vote and when Wyoming became a state in 1890 the women of the state achieved national citizenship.

When Susan reached her fiftieth birthday, a few friends planned to give a small celebration in her honor. The celebration grew and was finally held at the Women's Bureau in New York. Every newspaper in the city contained an article on the occasion and as Susan wrote to her Mother, "Really, had I been dead and these the last words, neither press nor friends could have been more generous."

During all the following years, the ladies were holding a yearly Women's Rights Convention in Washington. In 1871 Susan and Mrs. Stanton decided on a speaking tour to California. They spoke from the train platform in Laramie, spoke to the Mormons in Salt Lake City, were given passes on the Union Pacific Railroad by Governor Stanford of California. They spoke in San Francisco and toured the Yosemite Valley and when Mrs. Stanton started East, Susan went by steamer to Portland, and Oregon. She traveled thru that state, then toured Washington and went to Victoria, British Columbia, where she spoke several times to audience composed entirely of men as in 1871 English ladies did not attend public meetings. On New Year's Day, 1872, traveling thru a blizzard in the Northwest, Susan cast up her accounts for the year. She had made sixty three lectures in the East, twenty six in California and eighty two in the Northwest; one hundred and seventy one in all.

In the year 1872 as now all citizens were being urged to register and vote. In all the announcements there was nothing to say that they were addressed to men only. Susan urged the delegates to the Women's Rights Convention to go home and vote. In the 8th Ward in Rochester, sixteen ladies arrived to register. The names of the sixteen were duly registered on the voting lists. Among the sixteen were Susan B. Anthony, Mary Anthony (her sister) and Mrs. McLean, another sister. On November 5th the same sixteen went to the polls and succeeded in casting their ballots. Susan wrote to Mrs. Stanton, "Well, I've gone and done it. Positively voted the Republican ticket this A.M. at seven o'clock."

If Rochester was surprised to see women at the polls, it was even more surprised on November 28th to see perfect ladies being arrested. The sixteen were taken to court and held for the afternoon. The next day Susan was questioned by the District Attorney; her case was made a test case and she was bound over to the Marshall until her trial would come up.



After very unfair procedure in changing the place of trial, and in the Judge's order to the jury to find Miss Anthony guilty, Susan was fined one hundred dollars and costs. After the sentencing, Susan spoke to the court saying "Any honest debt I will pay. But I will never pay a dollar of your unjust penalty under laws that tax, fine, imprison and hang women while they deny them representation in government." Susan never paid the fine.

Mrs. Anthony, Susan's mother died in 1880 leaving the Rochester house to daughter Mary. It proved a very prudent thing to do as every cent Susan made went into publishing her History of Women's Rights or in the treasury of the group. By leaving the house to Mary, Mrs. Anthony was providing a home for both daughters. Susan was sixty years old.

Susan continued traveling and lecturing, attending the convention in Washington every year, returning to Rochester for short times, where now Mary was the only member of the family left. She worked with Mrs. Stanton on two volumes of History of the Woman's Suffrage Movement. In 1883, she accompanied a young friend on a trip to Europe, stayed in London, toured the continent. She and Mrs. Stanton lectured at Suffrage Rallies in London. Near the end of their stay Susan organized an international committee.

After her return from Europe, Susan was busy delegating authority to younger women and organizing the international group. In 1890, at the age of seventy, Susan decided to retire to Rochester. She rented Mary's house from her and managed it. Mary lived there and paid board. Susan's accounts read Pd. Rent, 25 dollars, Rec'd board from Sister Mary, 20 dollars. Then in 1892 Mrs. Stanton retired as President of the Women's Rights Organization and Susan was elected President. She had been retired only two years. That year she attended three political conventions in Minneapolis, Chicago and Omaha. In 1894, she was busy in both New York and Kansas, going back and forth three times.

In New York, alone, she spoke in every one of the sixty counties, traveling fifty to a hundred miles a day. The next year she traveled to California and toured that state, receiving help from Phoebe Hearst and Mrs. Leland Stanford. She spoke in Idaho and in that year the Idaho suffrage bill was passed.

In 1898 and 1899 Susan was in Rochester, consulting with Mrs. Harper, who wrote her biography, one stipulation being that Susan must stay home while it was written.

At the age of eighty, Susan retired as President of the National Organization. Returning to Rochester, she managed a campaign to have girls admitted to the University of Rochester and won and then went off to open a suffrage bazaar in New York with Mrs. Stanton, who was eighty five and Julia Ward Howe, who was Susan's age. A month later she was back in Rochester addressing the International Bricklayers and Masons.

The International council of Women met in Berlin in 1904. Susan thought she might not be able to attend but sister Mary offered to go along and they sailed on a German ship for three months in Europe. Wherever Susan appeared in public she was cheered and newspapers hailed her as "grand old woman of America" and "Miss Anthony of the world."

Susan's popularity with the press was so great that friends concealed the date of her return from reporters. Even so, a New York Times reporter was waiting for her at her door. She says "I gave him an account of my travels and then took off my hat and went to bed for a month." In 1905, the National Convention was held in Portland, Oregon, and Susan and Mary attended. Mary had never been to the Pacific Coast and, after the convention, they toured California from Mount Shasta to San Diego. Mary enjoyed the flowers and Susan enjoyed the mountains. According to Mary's diary the whole trip cost each sister two hundred dollars.

That winter in Rochester was blustery and cold. In spite of the weather the Political Equality Club gave a large demonstration on Susan's eighty sixth birthday. She was taken to and from the party in a closed carriage and left the following day to attend a convention in Baltimore. She wasn't feeling very well but managed to attend a dinner where Miss M. Carey Thomas, President of Bryn Mawr, said "To you, Miss Anthony, belongs by right, as to no other woman in the world's history, the love and gratitude of all women in every country of the civilized globe." "Susan went to another birthday celebration in Washington and then returned to Rochester. On reaching home she developed pneumonia, improved and then suffered a relapse. Her death was recorded in the Quaker Register; 13th and 3rd month 1906. Susan B. Anthony died this morning in her 87th year. Susan B. Anthony was buried from the largest church in Rochester, the Presbyterian. Her entire estate amounted to about forty five hundred dollars at the end of her lifetime of unceasing labor. Like all the money she ever possessed this sum went to Women's Suffrage. As one speaker at a memorial service said, "We shall never see her like again."

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This is a review of a book by Katherine Anthony