

idea had slipped through, employees under the merit system could have been elbowed out of their jobs by the simple device of reducing their pay to the starvation point to make way for political favorites.

- Certain department employees would have been removed from the protection of civil service. The League helped kill this bill in committee.
- A division of public assistance would have been set up in the state welfare department, thus extending political control and weakening civil service. The Leagues helped defeat this proposal in the Senate.

The next year, the Cuyahoga County League again announced its concern over evidences of the general breakdown of the civil service system in Ohio: the increased effort to exert political pressure on civil service employees; the tendency to lower standards in selection of employees charge with administering social security; and the failure of the legislature to provide adequate funds for operation of civil service. In one instance, the League disapproved the appointment of Charles F. Leisure as State Unemployment Compensation Commissioner on the grounds that Mr. Leisure had attempted to inject politics into the appointment of persons to civil service positions.

The League called a state conference of 16 organizations to consider these inroads against the state civil service system. At this meeting, Mr. Robert A. Weaver, of Cleveland, was named Chairman of a new organization called the Ohio Civil Service Council. This Council had as its immediate aim the drafting of

merit system legislation for submission to the General Assembly. Though the Ohio League later withdrew from the Council, members of the League of Women Voters continued to serve as members.

In April, 1941, the League got reports that state workers were to be assessed 5% of their salaries for five months to create a campaign fund for Governor Martin L. Davey and other candidates for nomination to state office. Legislative chairman, Mrs. C. C. Shively, requested the Attorney General to seek an injunction to prevent the levying against civil service employees of what was called "an assessment for a campaign fund."

Less than a month later, the Leagues of Ohio were rallied in opposition to the Boyd Bill. This bill, if it had passed, would have undermined the entire state civil service system.

In 1944, Mrs. Shively made this statement, "In working for Civil Service reform, we have won much recognition, particularly in exposing violations and in some cases in being the sole agent to detect them. While our reform measures in the form of bills have not had significant success, I believe that it would be generally conceded that the Ohio League of Women Voters has been out in front in this field and sometimes quite alone."

LOCAL VICTORY. The defeat of the city-manager government brought to light certain defects in the Cleveland civil service law which, 50 years before, had been considered progressive.

The Cleveland League of Women Voters protested when Mayor Harry L. Davis and his successor, Mayor Ray T. Miller, made war on Cleveland's civil service system. A headline lead to a story in the January 4, 1933, *Cleveland Press* read:

"League Demands Mayor Keep
Promise and Protect
City Workers"

It had become a customary practice to add hundreds of new unskilled employees to the city pay rolls three months before an election. These unprotected jobs were the politicians' "stock in trade"—at the expense of the taxpayer. Through this same loophole in the civil service system, men could be employed as laborers and then given the duties of classified civil service employees.

Although civil service conditions did improve somewhat under Mayor Burton's administration, the League of Women Voters was not willing to leave the fate of civil service to the discretion of the Mayor.

Some city employees were encouraged to form a Civil Service Employees Association and secured Wendell A. Falsgraf as their counsel. In cooperation with the Citizen's Civil Service Committee and the Citizens League, the County League of Women Voters helped organize an intensive campaign to extend civil service provisions of the city charter to give protection to some 5,000 unskilled city jobs.

Two attempts to amend the civil service provisions of the Cleveland city charter failed. But finally, in 1938, despite under-cover opposition from the political parties, an amendment which put unskilled jobs under civil service was passed by a narrow margin.

FUTURE ACTION. In the Cleveland City Council, in the Ohio Legislature, and in the Congress in Washington there always have been and probably always will be traditional opponents of the merit system. League experience has proved that guarding against a return to the "spoils system" of government is a never-ending job.

FOOD AND DRUG ACT

The League's nation-wide campaigns for the Child Labor Amendment, and for *Better Personnel in Government* pointed out that, nationally-united, League action could be a most powerful political weapon. The National League used this know-how for political action in its 1937-38 campaign for a modern Food and Drug Law.

For several years before 1937, Mrs. Harris T. Baldwin and a National League committee on Consumer Protection had studied needed changes in the 1907 Food, Drug and Cosmetic Law. Then came a series of tragic deaths resulting from elixir of sulphanimide poisoning which shocked the nation. These deaths could have been avoided by stricter food and drug legislation.

With this added impetus, the League of Women Voters intensified its campaign for up-to-date food and drug laws. In Cleveland, Mrs. Arthur E. Peter-silge, chairman of the local consumers' protective committee, trained five-minute speakers to go out to organizations in the community, telling them of the great need for a modern food and drug law. Mrs. Ralph Kane, one of the local committee's most diligent workers, remembers giving 90 such five-minute talks, herself.

At first, members of Congress tried to ignore this League campaign, but when the League succeeded in enlisting the support of other women's organizations and congressmen were buried in an avalanche of letters, they began to take notice of the growing clamor.

Like the suffragists, the League's strongest weapon in this campaign was in never giving up. In commenting on this League technique, Leyton Carter,

Director of the Cleveland Foundation, said, "The League of Women Voters has perfected the art of attrition." (ed. note: wearing down the opposition)

Remarking on the difficulties of this campaign, a representative of the National office said, "the most formidable lobby ever massed against a piece of legislation was organized against this bill . . . It worked quietly . . . the fate of the bill hung at times on complicated questions of legal procedure, court review, multiple seizure and injunctions."

When Congress passed the 1938 Food and Drug Act the League of Women Voters was given great credit for the victory.

COUNTY HOME RULE

While campaigning for better city government for Cleveland, the League's efficiency-in-government committee continued to study and work on the problems of better county government for Cuyahoga.

In 1932, Cuyahoga County was a metropolitan area with 4 cities, 35 villages, 15 townships and 52 school districts with 60 different tax rates. In addition to the unnecessary expense and duplication of services of these overlapping governments, each year the City of Cleveland—then as now—lost more and more of its citizens to the suburbs. A majority of these people living in the metropolitan areas of Cleveland earned their livelihood within the city's boundaries; they used city facilities—its transportation, its sewers, its docks, its bridges and its streets; but as suburban residents they contributed nothing to the city's maintenance.

This flight to the suburbs created many problems in government for the metropolitan areas of the State. Provisions of the Ohio Constitution had been modernized regarding *city* government, in 1912, with the passage of the City Home Rule Amendment.

However, there were no such provisions for modernization of *county* government. Several attempts to amend the Ohio Constitution by act of the Legislature, giving Ohio counties the right to reorganize their governments failed. Blocked in this approach, a special Cleveland *Committee of 400* which included Charles Taft, Harold H. Burton, Mayo Fesler, Leyton Carter and other prominent citizens determined to introduce a county home rule amendment by the initiative and referendum method.

So it was, that the Cleveland League asked for and got the support of other Leagues in the state in securing signed petitions (in the 88 counties) which would put such an amendment on the state ballots. Having long studied plans for reorganization of county government, under the leadership of Mrs. Max Hellman, the Cleveland League was ready to educate the state membership-at-large as to the advantage of centralizing responsibility for county government:

- by creation of an executive officer in the county;
- by reduction of the number of offices and boards in the county;
- by grouping activities in a few departments on the basis of functions, together with provision of sufficient flexibility to permit adjustment to meet the needs.

Early in 1932 when the Ohio League announced its state-wide campaign for legislation which would permit the reorganization of county government, the Cleveland newspapers welcomed the announcement. Said an editorial in the *Cleveland Press*, "The League of Women Voters goes after its jobs with thoroughness and direction, and it has a record of sticking longer and more persistently than most men's organi-

zations . . . People are tired of the nests for political leeches which we maintain in our populous areas under the names of counties, municipalities and townships . . . Now (in the depression) with taxes a desperate problem, simplifying government is a pressing personal problem to all taxpayers."

Leagues throughout the state circulated petitions to get this Home Rule Amendment on the ballot. In Cleveland, members of the Board, and many of the same workers who had gone "all out" to save the city-manager plan in 1931 helped in this campaign: Mrs. Hellman, Mrs. B. F. McQuate, Mrs. W. J. Schneider, Mrs. Earl L. Schoup, Mrs. J. Paul Wilkes, Mrs. Charles Savage, Mrs. George Bellamy, Miss Selma Sullivan, Miss Polly Prescott, Mrs. John W. Seaver, Mrs. E. E. Hill, Mrs. Frances F. Bushea, Mrs. Charles J. Patch Jr., Mrs. H. L. Beavis, Mrs. M. A. Dooley, Mrs. J. F. Coulston, Mrs. Richard E. Stifel, and others.

After getting the amendment on the ballot, the League took a major part in the campaign to get the Amendment approved. Its provisions represented a sincere attempt to be absolutely fair to the small municipalities by including the following *four burdles* through which a county charter must pass if it vested any municipal powers in the county: it must have the approval of a majority of those voting thereon (1) in the county, (2) in the largest municipality, (3) in the county outside of such municipality, and (4) in each of a majority of the combined total of municipalities and townships in the county (not including within any township any part of its area lying within a municipality).

At the time, the League believed with others that the *four burdles* were unavoidable, and campaigned for adoption of this compromise Amendment. How-

ever, when Cuyahoga County's Charter Commission was elected and began its deliberations, it was found that by *including* the *four burdles*, the League had helped set up an almost insurmountable barrier to reorganized county government.

On November 5, 1934, two League members, Mrs. Max Hellman and Mrs. B. F. McQuate were elected to serve on this Cuyahoga County Commission. However, true to its principles, the League had given its pre-election support to the issue (county home rule) but not the candidates. For, while making a point of the fact that the League believed that women should be named to serve on the Commission, the League did not support the candidacies of Mrs. Hellman and Mrs. McQuate.

During its working year, 1934-1935, the Charter Commission received suggestions from interested organizations like the League of Women Voters. The League also sent its personal representative, the ever-vigilant Mrs. James King.

By not including any municipal functions in the proposed charter, the Commission hoped to by-pass the formidable *four burdles*. Such a charter would need only the approval of a simple majority of the voters within the county.

In the election, the Charter, which was considered a very good Charter, did receive a majority of the 19,000 votes in the county (the first hurdle), and a majority in the City of Cleveland (the second hurdle). However, it did not pass the *third and fourth burdles*, and when the Board of Elections refused to certify the Charter, the case, (State, 4 rel., Howland v. Krause) was taken to the Supreme Court. Long before the case was decided, rumor had it that the Charter was "doomed."

CUYAHOGA CHARTER UNCONSTITUTIONAL. In a unanimous decision, the court ruled that in numerous instances the Charter proposed for Cuyahoga County took over municipal powers vested in municipalities by the Constitution or laws of the State, i. e., the initiative and referendum; power with reference to the Civil Service Commission; provision for a director of public safety (with all the powers of the sheriff). Finally, the court ruled that the charter could not be adopted because it had failed to receive the four majorities (*four burdles*) required for a charter which assumed any municipal powers.

Great effort had been invested in this campaign to reorganize the government of Greater Cleveland, and members of the League were bitterly disappointed with the results. The League fully realized that any future reform of county government would meet with the same down-state opposition. The *four burdles* had proved an almost impossible obstacle. Looking back on the "terrible price" the League and other organizations like the Citizens League paid to get a county home rule amendment, Mrs. McBride said, "we all collaborated, and we were all dumb. By accepting the *four burdles*, as a noose, we hanged ourselves."

STATE-WRITTEN CHARTERS. After 1936, there were several efforts to get partial county home rule. Section 1 of the Home Rule Amendment provided that a county could adopt a state-written charter if such a charter were approved by a majority vote at a special or general election. In 1937, a County Optional Plans bill, providing for two types of county reorganization was supported by the Ohio League, but failed even to reach the floor of the House. A similar bill, advanced by the Ohio Chamber of Com-

merce in 1941, provided for three optional forms of county government.

- County Manager (manager appointed by Board of County Commissioners)
- Elected Executive
- Commission

Under the county manager or elected executive government, the county manager or the executive would appoint all other administrative officials. Therefore, either of these plans which proposed to cut down the number of elected county officials, would have been a progressive step toward better county government.

However, once again a loaded "down state" legislature refused to pass legislation which would allow metropolitan counties, like Cuyahoga, to modernize their governmental structure.

FUTURE ACTION. To date, attempts to simplify and integrate the cumbersome structure of our many units of government in Cuyahoga County have failed, but the fight is not over.

In the past, Cleveland citizens have willingly shared their technical knowledge, their business experience and their interest in finding a solution to the many problems which beset this large metropolitan community. Without doubt, the "civic-mindedness" of Cleveland's citizens will inspire a continuing campaign for county government reform.

Today, many League members feel that because the Ohio League of Women Voters was so instrumental in getting the Home Rule Amendment adopted, it is the Leagues' inherited responsibility to continue to work for county government reform.

Opinions differ, however, as to the best method of approaching the problem. Mrs. Max Hellman and Mr.

Wendell Falsgraf believe that the first step is partial reform through a state-written charter (as provided in the County Optional Plans bills of 1937 and 1941).

Some think a quick, though partial solution to the acute problem of sewage disposal, water and transportation lies through the establishment of municipal authorities. With legislative approval and the voluntary cooperation of various governmental units within the metropolitan area, Greater Cleveland could set up such authorities. A good example of a successful authority is the New York Port Authority.

Others who have given this problem considerable thought and attention, believe that it is the League's responsibility to propose a substitute county home rule amendment at the next Constitutional Convention. This amendment would propose to eliminate the insurmountable *four burdles*.

MEMBERS AND MONEY

Before 1939, the Cuyahoga County League supported itself and also contributed its share financially to the Ohio State League office and the National office. Funds were obtained from its annual membership dues, calendar sales, annual thrift sales and special "extra curricular" benefit events like garden parties, country fairs, bridge teas and theater nights.

Remembering the depression years when it was a hectic struggle to make both ends of the League treasury meet, Mrs. Charles Patch Jr. says, "It is amazing to me, that year after year League members managed to carry on a sizable program, which won the respect of the legislators and the community, and had energy left to replenish the treasury by efforts such as—minding babies and ducks at country fairs, dancing, sorting old clothes, and playing bridge."

A public appeal for funds was made in 1930 for the

suffrage memorial fund which celebrated the 10th Anniversary of the National League of Women Voters. However, since the main support for this cause came from families and friends of prominent suffragists, it could be said that before 1939 the League of Women Voters had made no open request for public financial support for its own activities.

But after almost 20 years of proven service to the local community, the state and the nation, "not for the advantage of its own membership, but in behalf of the community," the League of Women Voters recognized its right to ask the public for financial support. Locally, the Cuyahoga County League had proved its value to the community through its non-partisanship participation in political campaigns. Not infrequently, however, a depleted treasury had forced the League to take an inexpensive back seat in an important local campaign.

Nationally, congressmen, professors and students had learned to rely on the publications of the National League of Women Voters for facts and resource materials. Important League publications like: *Disarmament and the World Conference*, *Taxes and Tax Trends*, and *Better Government Personnel* had established a scholarly reputation for League publications. But too often a restricted budget had limited their distribution to the public.

Then too, in every "League serviced community" in the country, League publications, study groups and public meetings had developed techniques, materials and leaders which helped to promote the American democratic system. Through its service to the public, the League of Women Voters had proved its worth to seek public financial support for its vast program of work on the local, state and national levels.

With the slogan—"More members, more money—for Democracy," the National League office took full advantage of this expansion campaign to further the League's 1939 foreign policy program of "selling Democracy." Miss Marguerite M. Wells, who in 1934 succeeded Miss Belle Sherwin as President of the National League of Women Voters, repeated again and again, during this campaign, the responsibility League members must take in making Democracy work in this country—"helping the U. S. set an example the world could follow."

WORLD DISARMAMENT

To bring the activities of the international cooperation committee of the Cleveland League up-to-date, we must go back somewhat in the story. After 1923, when the Cleveland Woman's Council for Prevention of War (and Promotion of Peace) was organized, the local League of Women Voters turned over its leadership in the women's peace movement to this new organization. Before the Women's Peace Council merged with the Adult Education Association to become the Foreign Affairs Council, the League of Women Voters was one of the several organizations sponsoring the annual Foreign Affairs Institutes.

Though the Cleveland League continued to have a separate international relations cooperative committee, there is little question but that the active interest of both the local League and the National League in the peace movement and world affairs subsided during the late 1920's. Then came the Manchurian incident of 1931 which shocked a "laissez faire" world and re-awakened the League to its responsibility to think and study about the problems of peace.

Before the Geneva Disarmament Conference in February, 1932, the League of Women Voters helped in the drive to enlist the united support of the women of the world behind the plan for *peace through disarmament*, which was organized by the National Committee on the Cause and Cure of War. As National President of this Committee, once again Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt took her place as leader of the women's peace movement in the United States, declaring, "the future world peace is a woman's task and that peace will be assured only when the reduction of armaments has been attained."

Locally, Mrs. John W. Brown Jr., organized Cuyahoga County's first foreign affairs study group, and Mrs. F. F. Griswold, who succeeded Mrs. Brown as chairman of the League's international relations committee, planned the local League's part in Mrs. Catt's campaign. All other League activities were shelved for the month of December, 1931. Armed with petitions, a committee of 30 League members went out to other organizations in the community, to secure 1000 signatures on their roster favoring peace through disarmament. These, added to those of other Leagues, made up the 6000 signatures which were to be forwarded to the Geneva Disarmament Conference. To stimulate the thinking of Cleveland women on the problems of peace and disarmament, Mrs. M. F. Bixler led a series of six round table discussions which were jointly sponsored by the League and the Y. W. C. A. (another of the nine original member organizations of Mrs. Catt's Committee on the Cause and Cure of War.)

Once again, the League of Women Voters was assuming a more active role in helping to shape U. S. foreign policy. The extent of this role was defined at the 1932 National Convention in Detroit, where in a

surprise move, Mrs. A. J. McGuire of St. Paul, Minnesota introduced a League of Nations resolution from the floor. As a result, the League voted to urge the United States to join the League of Nations. This was a momentous departure, for though the League of Nations was no longer a partisan issue, the fact that the League's standing committee on International Relations had failed to propose a League of Nations' platform proves that it was still a most controversial issue. Giving support to the League of Nations, this Convention also reaffirmed the League's faith in other efforts for world peace—the Kellogg pact and the World Court—urging the United States to participate more actively in international efforts to restore peace in the Orient.

HIGH TARIFF. Delegates to this Detroit convention did not go back to their states waving a noble banner for peace, like delegates to the earlier League Conventions of 1921 and 1922 had done. Instead, League members began to point out that a relationship existed between world peace and world trade. This stand was based on a study of "economic factors involved in perpetuating the depression."

When a post-convention committee was named to formulate a program on which the full force of the League might be concentrated "to meet the challenge of the present economic emergency," the point was definitely made that the League's stand on foreign affairs, which was originally based on humanitarian grounds, had now taken on an economic cast. A newspaper report of this session stated, "The support of the disarmament efforts of the League of Nations was discussed, not only as a preventative of war, but also as a relief of world-wide industry through the removal of the necessity of economic self-sufficiency in

wartime, which is held to be a reason for the tariff wall."

Two years before the Detroit convention, Cuyahoga County's cost-of-living committee made a tariff study. And it was on the basis of this study that Mrs. McBride introduced a tariff resolution from the floor of the Convention—a resolution calling for the "immediate repeal of the Hawley-Smoot tariff law and the reduction of the tariff schedule in this country." Though the post-convention session recognized the relationship between international peace and foreign trade, the convention itself had not been ready to act against the high tariff wall, this "most controversial" resolution died in committee.

Nevertheless, on the local level, the Cleveland League continued to carry through with "action." At the annual city Convention that year, the League stressed international tariff reduction as one of its main objectives.

STUDY GROUPS. When Mrs. F. F. Griswold stepped up as state chairman of foreign relations early in 1934, Mrs. J. Preston Irwin succeeded her as county foreign relations chairman. That fall, Mrs. Irwin organized the Lakewood foreign affairs group and also helped start similar groups in Shaker Heights and Cleveland Heights.

Mrs. B. C. Goss's group in Shaker Heights continued to meet for several years. The Lakewood Library group, which was led first by Mrs. Irwin, and then by Mrs. Clyde F. Varner, is "still going strong" today. The Cleveland Heights group, however, got into trouble.

Locally, foreign affairs study groups were a new League technique and no hard and fast rules had been established for their procedure. This particular group

wandered so far off the League's program of study, that in 1937 the county Executive Board took direct action to "pull in the reins." There was a reorganization of the foreign affairs study groups, and County President, Mrs. L. Scott Isham, announced to the newspapers that in the future, League of Women Voters' study groups would be "for members only" and would follow an outlined study program in conformity with the work of the League.

RECIPROCAL TRADE. In 1934 and again in 1936, the National League Conventions continued to vote support for the League of Nations, but the line was now being drawn between those League members who clung to the hope of peace through isolation and those who believed that the best hope was in collective security. There was a tense debate at the 1936 Cincinnati Convention before a majority of the delegates approved the League platform item—"downward revision of tariff by Reciprocal Trade Agreements." As in the fight for support of the League of Nations, support for Mr. Hull's trade agreements program was a major victory for those advocating a more aggressive League of Women Voters' foreign policy program.

In 1938, when the National League President, Miss Marguerite M. Wells, addressed a full session of the 13th National Convention in St. Louis, she told League members that the Reciprocal Trade Program (which was extended in 1937 for a three-year period) was the major world attempt to stem the tide of economic nationalism. Said Miss Wells, "Tariff barriers, so evident since World War I, have admittedly played a major role in developing current international friction and accompanying war preparations."

By 1939, the National League of Women Voters

was advocating that the President should have the power to put embargoes on aggressor nations. Mrs. Louise Leonard Wright, the National League's Foreign Policy Chairman and only woman adviser sent by the U. S. to the Lima Peace Conference, was making an exhaustive speaking tour, attempting to unite League opinion behind a foreign policy program of collective security.

COLLECTIVE SECURITY. Those who favored a more aggressive foreign policy program for the League of Women Voters won a "turning point" victory at the 1940 New York Convention when a majority vote approved "a foreign policy as a non-belligerent which permits discrimination against an aggressor and favors the victims of aggression."

Shortly after this, when the National League urged President Roosevelt to repeal the Arms Embargo provisions of the Neutrality Act, the local League Board sent a letter to Cuyahoga County Congressmen, urging them to support repeal of the Arms Embargo: "The vast majority of our people are known to favor the English and French belligerents . . . It is possible that very disastrous conditions will occur if we deprive these belligerents of necessary commodities, should the situation become desperate.

The prospects of peace were growing darker, and as the storm clouds of war tumbled closer to the U. S., League members of Greater Cleveland gave more attention to the problems of the world situation. A succession of skillful chairmen—Mrs. Clyde F. Varner, Mrs. U. V. Portmann, and Mrs. Charles Bang, planned foreign affairs quiz-bees, lecture series and study group programs, on the "Monroe Doctrine," trade relations, collective security, and related subjects.

In the months immediately proceeding Pearl Harbor—December, 1941—League members helped to further "the new U. S. policy of aiding the democracies." There were public meetings and lectures to call public attention to the desperate need to win the "Battle of Production." Mrs. Harold G. Whitcomb worked tirelessly to rally Cleveland's support in this campaign.

After Pearl Harbor, a special Council meeting in Indianapolis decided that the League of Women Voters had a wartime role. That it was a League responsibility, as Miss Wells said, "... to convey bits and pieces about current government to busy men and women in each community."

"LET THE PEOPLE KNOW." To reach a larger wartime audience, the National office developed new tools and techniques. One of the League's new tools was the "broadside." These bright-colored, single information sheets with their catchy, thought-provoking titles covered a few simple facts about a subject.

League members were urged to take these "broad-sides" in hand—*Two Fronts; War and Postwar; Bigger Taxes are Better Taxes; Subsidies and Price Control*—to engage the milkman, the butcher, and the taxicab driver in casual face-to-face conversations.

Under Mrs. Charles Bang's dynamic leadership, Ohio Leagues took their part in the 1944 nation-wide campaign to "Let the People Know" (the League's war service slogan) about Dumbarton Oakes and Bretton Woods. With her sincere interest in the necessity of defeating isolationist forces within the country and the need to plan ahead for a United Nations organization, Mrs. Bang, who was elected President of the Ohio League of Women Voters in 1943, was a well-chosen leader for the times.

She encouraged local Leagues to organize neighborhood discussion groups, to use this new National League technique for reaching a larger, more available audience. (ed. note: Those were gas rationing days.) Mrs. Kenneth Donnal, County foreign policy chairman, Mrs. Winford Grieling, discussion group chairman, Mrs. Roger J. Herter, Mrs. Ralph Kane, Mrs. Clyde F. Varner, Mrs. Walter Sicha, Mrs. A. R. Morrill, Mrs. P. S. Kingsbury, Mrs. Gordon W. Clarke, Mrs. Lowell Raymond, Mrs. S. Burns Weston, Mrs. Paul Eden, Mrs. William Southward and Mrs. S. Wise were among those who attended leaders training classes where Mrs. Bang and others gave practical demonstrations of discussion group methods.

The Lakewood study and discussion group continued to meet at the Lakewood Library, and in 1944, Mrs. Bang organized her Shaker Heights foreign affairs discussion group.

COUNTY PROGRAM. The Cuyahoga County League's war service program was a full schedule of work. In addition to carrying forward the campaign for postwar planning for the peace, and contributing dollars to the war effort through savings bonds (a League job most capably handled by Mrs. John T. Oertel, war service chairman), the County League Board and the branch Leagues of the County held themselves responsible for continuing other long-time program items: helping to hold up Ohio's maximum hour standards for women workers (which were threatened by the Ross bill); planning for postwar urban redevelopment; studying postwar social security plans; waging a campaign for better welfare services for children and helping put the Ascherman Act into effect, which would help solve Ohio's problem of the mental delinquent.

WELFARE ADMINISTRATION

A succession of committee chairmen from the time of Mrs. Lucia Johnson Bing, Edith Mason and Parmelia Shields in the 20's to Mrs. James T. Hoffmann, Mrs. Orrin L. Douglass, Mrs. Charles Patch Jr., Mrs. James Stewart and Mrs. Reed Rowley in the 30's directed the County League's efforts to improve the welfare of children and to solve the problem of caring for mental delinquents.

Increased welfare loads during the depression and provisions of the Social Security Act had accentuated the inadequacies of the existing welfare structures, which had become a "hodgepodge" of overlapping state-county-and-municipal services. With thousands of dollars in public funds being recklessly spent because of duplicated responsibility; with no clear line authority; and with many counties needing child welfare boards; there was a dire necessity for investigation and action which would overhaul Ohio's services offered to children.

Following the report of a Governor's Commission, which included a representative of the League, Mrs. N. M. Stanley of Dayton, the League of Women Voters supported legislation for the reorganization of the county welfare services in 1935, 1937 and 1939.

Bringing this question up to date, it is significant to note that Cuyahoga County implemented the 1943 County Welfare Services bill January 1, 1948. Moreover, in spite of the fact that the appointment of the County Welfare Board is still pending, Cuyahoga County has coordinated its program for aid to the blind, dependent children and county poor relief. A separate Cuyahoga County Child Welfare Department and separate municipal relief agencies still make for a

"hickety-pickety" system of welfare administration, according to Mrs. Lucia Johnson Bing, who is now with the Cleveland Welfare Federation. "But," says Mrs. Bing, "we are working hard to get all municipal welfare departments coordinated with the county departments, and eventually we are going to get it."

CHILDREN'S CODE

In January, 1940, President Roosevelt called a "White House Conference on Children in a Democracy." This conference, like the U. S. Children's Bureau's "Child's Year" program of 1918, stimulated the country's interest in the problems of children. Mrs. James T. Hoffmann, the National League's Child Welfare and then Social Welfare Chairman from 1939-42, was one of the National League's two representatives to this Conference. In looking back on the White House Conference, Mrs. Hoffmann recognizes that it was this conference that inspired her to work so hard for the revision of the Ohio Children's Code.

1943, the year the County Welfare Reorganization bill was approved, was also the year that the Ohio League did its big job in educating the voters of the state on the need to revise the Ohio Children's Code—Ohio's body of laws regulating adoption of children, foster home care, the protection and care of the homeless, dependent, and neglected children.

Mr. Hal H. Griswold, Chairman of a Governor's investigating commission, advised the League in its campaign to inform the public on the need to revise Ohio's laws: on the miserable condition of foster home placement in some of Ohio's counties; of the thousands of dollars in public funds needlessly wasted because of overlapping responsibility; and also, the

problems of administration of laws when there was no established line of authority.

The newspapers helped in this campaign, bringing to light conditions in non-certified foster homes. And a public desire to know more of these sordid conditions regarding the welfare of Ohio's children furthered the campaign for improved legislation.

At a League of Women Voters—Women's City Club meeting, Mrs. Hoffmann, Mr. Griswold, Mrs. Arthur H. Van Horn and others, explained the need for revising the Children's Code to attending state Legislators. During this campaign, League leaders gave numerous speeches throughout the community and there was a big League-sponsored public meeting.

In 1945, the General Assembly approved the County Services bill for children (a recodification of the Ohio Children's Code.) Among other provisions, this law made it mandatory for all Ohio Counties to establish child welfare boards. Previously, in 1929, Cuyahoga County had voluntarily established a Child Welfare Board under permissive legislation passed in 1921.

ASCHERMAN ACT

For years, Ohio's care and treatment of mental defectives with known records for sex offenses against children was a "touchy" subject, and a political football. The courts shrugged off the responsibility, explaining that the State government made no provision for housing such delinquents. And few state legislators had Margaret Mahoney's fearless determination to help solve the problem.

Judge Mary B. Grossman and others of the Cuyahoga County League who had studied the subject were

familiar with the pattern of the defective's repeated offenses. They advocated that the state provide special hospitals and clinics for defective delinquents.

In 1937, a series of child murders in Cleveland and Cuyahoga County shocked the public into awareness that in the majority of cases such crimes were committed by mental defectives with known records of previous offenses. The League took quick advantage of this opportunity. Backed by the state League, the Cuyahoga County League of Women Voters rallied support for the Ascherman Act—legislation which would provide for the commitment of mentally defective prisoners.

For several years, the Ascherman Act was on the books, but it was an ineffective law. The League had recognized that this legislation did not go far enough, and that it had loopholes; it did not provide "indeterminate" sentences for mental delinquents or housing for their confinement. Nevertheless, the League supported its passage, believing it to be a good step in the right direction.

No cases were committed under the Ascherman Act until 1943. That year a new wave of public indignation swept Cleveland, when Edward J. Ralph, a defective parolee was found guilty of the rape-killing of a 5 year old girl. Once again, the League took advantage of the public's interest in the problem. Mrs. Charles Bang, State President of the Ohio League, called together a committee of citizens—States Senators Margaret A. Mahoney of Cleveland and P. H. Rogers of Lorain; City Welfare Director Edward L. Worthington; and Municipal Judge Stanton Addams of E. Cleveland. This committee conferred with State Welfare Director Herbert R. Mooney in Columbus, and Mr. Mooney agreed to reverse the previous policy

of the state penal institutions and accept prisoners under the Ascherman Act.

Immediately after this conference, the Cuyahoga County League President, Mrs. Malcolm L. McBride, named a special League committee on defective delinquents which included: Mrs. Reed Rowley, social welfare chairman and the chairman of this committee, Judge Mary B. Grossman, Senator Margaret A. Mahoney, Mrs. Jules Eshner, Miss Mary Nixon, Miss Florence Judkins, Mrs. A. R. Morrill, and others.

In August, 1943, the County League, on the recommendation of this special committee, requested Governor John Bricker to set up a commission to study and recommend a long term program for mental hygiene in Ohio and to fill the office of Mental Hygiene Commissioner, which had been vacant for two years. Subsequently, Governor Bricker created such a committee for mental health and appointed a Mental Hygiene Commissioner.

The League's special committee became a permanent committee on defective delinquents, and sometimes as many as 30 members attended its monthly sessions. Lt. Col. Royal Grossman, medical and psychiatric authority on the psychopathic offender, spoke at a League-sponsored public meeting, which was called to interest citizens and public officials in the problem.

There was a thorough study of the Ascherman Act and how it could be strengthened; some cases were followed through the courts; and an attempt was made to get legislation in action to back a sound welfare building program, with adequate personnel and preventive measures.

Mrs. Reed Rowley has this to say of the League's accomplishments in this field: "With the aid and ad-

vice of a distinguished, well-informed and faithful committee, the League's social welfare department had the satisfaction of watching public indifference toward the defective delinquent and related problems change to indignation and determination to correct conditions in the community and state. It can be a lasting satisfaction to the League to have played a real part in helping to raise Ohio from 44th place in care of its mentally ill, to a position more comparable with its wealth and prestige."

VOTERS' SERVICE

Year after year, and election after election, there were the traditional Women's City Club-League of Women Voters' candidate meetings. Through the years, conscientious voters had come to depend on the Voters' Service information prepared by the League.

It would be impossible to mention these campaigns in detail or to name the many Voters' Service chairmen. However, in 1944, the League marked up such an outstanding pre-election campaign that it cannot be overlooked. Many factors combined to make the 1944 election important: the war, the anticipated problems of the post war peace, food shortages, the much-debated vote of the absentee soldier, etc.

"Profoundly shocked," in 1943, when the Senate killed a federal soldiers' vote bill, the Cuyahoga County League had asked Ohio congressmen to urge Congress to establish federal supervision of absentee voting. When the soldier vote was left to the discretion of the states, the League recognized that there was a job to be done in translating Ohio's complicated absentee voting procedure—into words of less than six syllables.

Mrs. Ralph Kane led the 1944 Voters' Service brigade which included: Mrs. J. C. Poffenberger, Miss

Mary E. Crawford, Mrs. Louis Scher, Mrs. George Boeddiner, Mrs. John L. McWhorter, Mrs. S. Ward Balkwill, Mrs. Frank Buck, Mrs. John T. Oertel, Mrs. Fred C. Baldwin, Mrs. Herman Kraeft, Mrs. Earl L. Shaner, Mrs. Edmund Smircina, Mrs. Henry L. Brandt, Mrs. Gordon W. Clarke, Mrs. H. R. Davies, and others.

Once again a house-to-house doorbell ringing campaign had all the enthusiasm of suffrage days, for besides "getting-out-the-vote," these canvassers were taking a public opinion poll on important issues of the day. In 1944, the League sponsored not one, but four pre-election candidates meetings. Workers distributed the new *Voters' Primer*, a booklet summarizing Ohio election laws and voting procedures which was compiled by Mrs. Charles Bang and Mrs. Paul C. Roundy; a short digest of how absentee soldiers could vote in Ohio; a booklet on voting for new citizens; and the regular state and local "Voters' Information Service"—candidates answers to questionnaires.

Voters' Schools for high school students and interested citizens were held in several neighborhoods. And, "at the last minute," League volunteers turned out to "man the election booths," when the Board of Elections called for League aid to relieve an acute labor shortage.

Totaling the record for the State Leagues' 1944 pre-election activities, State President, Mrs. Charles Bang announced that 31,200 copies of the state candidates' "Voters' Information Service" had been distributed throughout Ohio.

LEAGUE REORGANIZATION

When Miss Marguerite M. Wells became President of the National League of Women Voters in 1934, she began stressing her conviction that "less study and

more action" would make the League a more effective organization.

Whether one concurred with Miss Wells' plan for reorganizing the basic structure of the League of Women Voters or not, most members of the League agreed that the League's too-long program and its rigid departmental structure needed to be streamlined. Each year the barriers between League departments had become more insurmountable and it was understandable how a member of the League of Women Voters could be a specialist in child welfare or one of the other five major departments without having any idea of the League's other programs of work.

The first step in reorganization was the amalgamation of several departments under economic welfare and social welfare. This was a welcome reform and one that had been contemplated for sometime. The success of three nation-wide campaigns: *Better Personnel in Government*, food and drug legislation and the 1939 drive for "more members, and more money," together with the new demands of the wartime situation, encouraged the National office to propose more radical reforms in the League's tools and techniques.

To get a clear picture of how succeeding plans for altering the basic structure of the League of Women Voters affected the Cuyahoga County League, we must go back in our story, to 1920.

BRANCH LEAGUES. Shortly after the greater Cleveland Woman's Suffrage party re-organized as the Cleveland League of Women Voters, a group of Lakewood suffragists—Mrs. A. B. Pyke, Mrs. C. B. Johnson, Mrs. Jesse Woods, Mrs. C. E. Kendel, Mrs. H. B.

Mallett, and others founded the Lakewood League of Women Voters. This League continued as a separate organization until May, 1933, when it merged with the Cleveland League, becoming a branch of the Cuyahoga County League of Women Voters.

This merger not only increased the membership of the League of Women Voters in Metropolitan Cleveland, but also brought many outstanding Lakewood leaders into the larger sphere of work on the County level. Among these leaders were three future County League Presidents—Mrs. James T. Hoffmann, Mrs. Harold G. Whitcomb and Mrs. Arthur H. Van Horn; Mrs. Ralph Kane and Mrs. Roger J. Herter who were particularly interested in problems of economic and social welfare; Mrs. J. Preston Irwin, Mrs. Clyde F. Varner, Mrs. P. S. Kingsbury—foreign affairs; Mrs. John H. Devlin—child welfare; Mrs. Henry Brandt—voters' service, and others.

Other League study branches had a long-time if somewhat less continuous history. After the Cleveland League of Women Voters was organized, there were repeated and often successful revivals of the old suffrage district groups—Northeast, West Side, Cleveland Heights and East Cleveland. Sometimes several years intervened between organized sessions of these study branches, and since there were many complete changes in membership it is difficult to establish an exact time when any one of these groups had its beginning. Yet disrupted as their history was, one is safe in saying that together with Lakewood, Shaker Heights and University Heights, these study groups started the momentum which brought about the eventual reorganization of the Cuyahoga County League of Women Voters.

After 1928, Mrs. Annetta Gross (Zillmer) Fuchs,

with the able assistance of Miss Irma Milde, engaged a more active branch League program. . . . time, Mrs. J. Paul Wilkes, Mrs. T. A. Strug; Miss Bertelle Lyttle organized an East Cleveland branch; Mrs. Arthur Shaw revived the W group; Mrs. John W. Brown had her foreign affairs study group at the Public Library; and the business and professional women had a group which met in the evening.

The Shaker Heights League was formally organized in 1932, when Mrs. Arthur E. Petersilge with Mrs. S. Burns Weston, Mrs. Carl Narten, Mrs. B. C. Goss and others saw the need to investigate high utility rates. That same year, Mrs. Goss, first Shaker Heights chairman, began her foreign affairs study group.

In 1938, Mrs. W. J. Schneider with the help of Mrs. Max Hellman, Mrs. Edward L. Viets, and others revived a Cleveland Heights branch. About this same time the League's Executive Secretary, Mrs. Andrew Lenga who lived in Berea, started a Berea branch League. League members living in Chagrin Falls—Mrs. O. M. Knutsen, Miss Elsie Fuller, Mrs. George Arthur and others, started a League study program under the guidance of the County Board. And in 1943, Mrs. Brooks W. Maccracken, Mrs. H. G. Sheakley, Mrs. John L. McWhorter, Mrs. William H. Woodside and others formed a University Heights branch League.

It would be impossible to name the many women who contributed to the development of the local League branches, however, in addition to those who have been named above, these women should be mentioned for their consistent interest in the branch League program: *Northeast*: Mrs. E. J. Kenealy, Mrs. Edmund Smircina, Mrs. Virgil Allen, Mrs. A. B. Cun-

ingham, Mrs. Dan Cull, Mrs. P. A. Geier, Mrs. K. G. Reider, and Mrs. James Brown. *West Side*: Mrs. J. W. Ellms, Mrs. Dora Sicha, Mrs. Emma Williams, Mrs. Harry Askew, Mrs. Arthur Shaw, Mrs. C. M. Hitchings, and Mrs. Gertrude Wild. *Cleveland Heights*: Mrs. Earl L. Shaner, Mrs. Walter Sicha, Mrs. R. G. Blum, Miss Elizabeth Gourley, Mrs. P. Jerome Pasch, Mrs. Lowell Raymond, Miss Mary Elizabeth Crawford, Mrs. Herman Kraeft, Mrs. J. C. Poffenberger, and Mrs. Andrew Meyer. *Shaker Heights*: Mrs. A. A. Treuhart, (member of State Board), Mrs. William J. Piwonka, Mrs. Bernard Winterick, Mrs. Louis Scher, Mrs. Kenneth Donald, Mrs. S. Burns Weston, Mrs. Carl Narten, Mrs. B. C. Goss, Mrs. Louis Bing Jr., and Mrs. Charles Bang. *Lakewood*: Mrs. Mark Schinnerer, Mrs. James N. Wychgel, Mrs. B. F. McQuate, Mrs. Gordon W. Clarke, Mrs. Minor Allen, Mrs. H. H. Davies, Mrs. George Broadhurst, Mrs. Paul Reese, and Mrs. Frank Nase.

BETTER INTEGRATION. After 1938, several factors contributed to a general increase in League membership, the country-over. With the war in Europe, new voters and women who had not fully realized their citizenship responsibilities, when they got the vote in 1920, were now joining the League of Women Voters. Women joined the League because it was a thriving, healthy organization with a record of important accomplishments.

With its consistent non-partisan record of political study and action, the League had proved itself and was ready to step to the front in a position of nationwide leadership, to meet the wartime emergency. The 1939 nation-wide League expansion campaign added momentum to an increasing membership trend which was already underway.

This increasing membership created organizational problems for the Cuyahoga County League. In 1940, the local group was most willing to experiment with a National League plan for reorganizing the study groups into branch Leagues. This plan, which was introduced in Cleveland by Mrs. Walter K. Fisher—a member of the National Board — continued the County Board's authority for directing programs of the branch Leagues, but gave the local groups some autonomy in that they could elect their own officers.

After the 1940 New York Convention approved a more aggressive foreign policy position for the League, the National office quickened its campaign for better League integration to meet the wartime emergency. The campaign within the League to popularize this idea of better integration was as well-organized and as well-planned as a campaign for needed national legislation.

Mrs. James T. Hoffmann, who as a member of the National League Board, attended the Indianapolis Council meeting immediately after Pearl Harbor, says, "It was at the Indianapolis meeting that the League of Women Voters turned itself into a single purpose organization, with a wartime role."

It was Miss Wells' wise leadership that recommended the necessity of uniting all League effort into a "wartime service program." She adjusted the League's old-time pattern for study and action to the needs of the war emergency. She devised new League tools and techniques.

OHIO ACTS. In 1943, a majority of the delegates to the Ohio State Convention in Columbus approved the National League's proposed next step for "better integration," by voting to discard the long-established state departmental structure.

(1944-45 League President) Mrs. Charles Bang and Mrs. A. A. Treuhaft.

This investigation, which started in about 1940, proved that the Cleveland League's problems were unlike any other metropolitan area in the country. Some of these were as follows:

- Greater Cleveland included 55 municipalities (approximately 10 times the maximum number of municipalities of any county in the country, where the League of Women Voters was organized). Practically speaking, it was an impossibility for one County League Board to evaluate and act on the local problems of these many municipalities.
- As an appendage of the Cuyahoga County League, the local branch Leagues had little prestige in their local communities.
- The branch League program—as decided by the County Board, did not provide for sufficient "action" on local problems of the various municipalities of the county.
- There was also criticism of the fact that strong leaders of the branch Leagues were persuaded to take on full-time jobs for the County Board.
- The County Board in 1945-46 sometimes included as many as 40 members and according to Mrs. W. J. Schneider, County League President, it was generally recognized that the County League was getting too big to operate effectively.
- There was too little participation in the League program by the general membership, with too much responsibility vested in the members of the County Board.

Though the County League recognized the need for change, the immediate action which preceded the reorganization of the Cuyahoga County League of Women Voters was a ruling of the 1946, Kansas City National Convention. This ruling stated that in the future there should be no more than one League in a city.

One month after the National Convention in May, Cleveland's annual city Convention voted approval of the plan for reorganizing the County League of Women Voters. This plan called for the reorganization of the branch Leagues as independent autonomous groups, with an interlocking Cuyahoga County Council.

As the County Council now operates, it is responsible for coordinating study and action programs of the seven local Leagues on problems of county-wide interest: finance, voters' service, public relations and county reorganization. These independent local Leagues are: Lakewood, Shaker Heights, Cleveland, (formed from the nucleus of Northeast and West Side branches) Cleveland Heights (a combination of University Heights and Cleveland Heights branches) East Cleveland, Westlake, and Bay Village.

"EVERY WOMAN" ORGANIZATION

Thus closes the first twenty-five years of an organization which, at the time of its founding, had a life expectancy of four or five years.

In the last years of the suffrage movement, over 80,000 women of Cuyahoga County were united for a single cause—"Votes for Women"—however, only a comparatively small number of these women "carried on" as members of the League of Women Voters.

The record shows how this new organization set out to accomplish its goals—to educate women not

only to use the vote, but to use the vote intelligently. It also shows how early League members made up the handicap of a modest budget by giving unselfishly of their service to the cause of more democracy and better government.

The League of Women Voters profited by its experiences, both good and bad. And gradually, as League members gained confidence in their knowledge on matters of government, they broadened the scope of the League program. In addition to the traditional fields of women's interests, the League gave consideration to weightier matters like taxes, tariffs and international relations.

During the war years, the League's *study and action* pattern for attacking a problem proved a dependable and adaptable "yardstick" for measuring the emergencies of the war-time world. And in those years, the League won the advantage of a larger participating membership.

Today, the League of Women Voters in Cuyahoga County is a group of seven, independent and autonomous local Leagues. The League is not just a board of important people, it is an "Every Woman" organization. With its open membership policy, there are no barriers of race or creed.

Yes, the record proves that in Cuyahoga County as elsewhere in the country, the League of Women Voters has more than lived up to the expectations of its founder, Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt. Each passing year has added to the League's influence and strength in the community, in the Legislature, and in the Congress.

LEADERS PREDICT PROMISING FUTURE FOR LEAGUE

Current leaders have this to say about the reorganization and the future of the League of Women Voters in Cuyahoga County:

"Autonomy for the League of Women Voters of Lakewood has furthered unity of membership; a closer contact with the State and National Leagues; and has developed a 'grass roots' sense of responsibility."

MRS. PAUL E. FREDERICK,
President, League of Women Voters of Lakewood

"It seems to me that forming separate Leagues in the municipalities of Cuyahoga County has made two real contributions to our community life: One is, that a larger group of women are familiar with the problems of holding elections, conducting public schools and supplying the services of City Government. The second is, that public officials are encouraged by the intelligent, considered attention League women bring to community problems."

MISS MARY ELIZABETH CRAWFORD,
President, Cleveland Heights League of Women Voters

"The increase in the number of Leagues and the number of League members, and in member participation, are all evidence of the advantages of dividing the old County League into small, autonomous groups. The present organization plan is ideally suited to the League's purpose of developing responsible citizens."

MRS. CHARLES BANG,
*Shaker Heights representative to the County Council
Member of State Board, Voters' Service Chairman.*

"This reorganization period of the League has naturally presented difficult and challenging problems. Arriving at the seemingly best solutions has necessitated the willingness to cooperate, patience, compromise, objective thinking, and vision on the part of all. The satisfactory progress to date, fortifies our belief in the wisdom of the decision to reorganize, and it is with great confidence that we look to the future."

MRS. EDWARD J. KENEALY,
President, Cuyaboga County Council
Member of State Board.

"Reorganization has presented an entirely new picture, emphasizing the importance of the individual in the scheme of government, from the local scene in the foreground through the vast world panorama."

MRS. CRONJE CARNAHAN,
President, League of Women Voters of East Cleveland

"Since reorganization, the members of the Cleveland League have a vehicle of their own through which they can actively participate in the municipal affairs of their city, and yet maintain, through the County Council League, close contact with the members of other local Leagues."

MRS. RICHARD M. BOURNE,
President, League of Women Voters of Cleveland

"The establishment of the League of Women Voters of Shaker Heights, as an autonomous unit made the League a true and vital force in the community. Because the local program is devoted to local governmental matters—those matters closest to our members—there has been an active and intense interest in them. Because of this interest, the weight of opinion of League members is becoming increasingly felt in the community. The growth in membership (more than doubled in three years) has come about because the League of Women Voters of Shaker Heights deals with those governmental matters which are on every Shaker

citizens' doorstep. This awareness among our members of their responsibility as citizens, is the first step toward extending their interest to state and national matters. The rock on which a strong League is built is the percentage of active members within that League."

MRS. A. A. TREUHART,
President, League of Women Voters of Shaker Heights
Member of State Board.

"Perhaps the change in the local organization of the Leagues was too rapid, but we have grown by leaps and bounds since. Furthermore, I think that for county-wide problems, such as county reorganization or voting machines, seven local Leagues present a stronger front on the county level, since all the local Leagues can bring concentrated action on the city councils."

MRS. RALPH W. KANE,
Lakewood Representative to the County Council

"Looking backwards, to legislation in the national congress and in the state, which the League has fought for and supported, some victories have been won; some are still to be won. It is my conviction that local League Boards are obligated to keep their members informed of our past record and our platform, so that when the need arises, those members will be ready to fight to sustain our accomplishments and to support measures not yet achieved. We must never desert our past objectives as we press forward to meet newer ones."

MRS. MALCOLM L. McBRIDE,
Member, State Advisory Board

SOURCE MATERIAL

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A Brief Legislative History of the League of Women Voters—1920-46.

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A more complete bibliography will be available after September, 1949, in the Cleveland Public Library.

Social Sci 5th Floor
Ohio Woman Suffrage Assn.