

Angelica's Women Voters in the 1893 Election

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This is a story of Angelica's women voters and their involvement in the 1893 local election. In 1893, 137 women in the town of Angelica registered to participate in the 1893 election for School Commissioner of Allegany County's Northern District. Looking at this election provides some insight into the history of women's suffrage in New York state and its effects on local politics.¹

The 1893 election took place in a time before women had not fully gained the right to vote in New York state and there was only partial suffrage for women. The women's suffrage movement had been present in New York State since the 1840s: with New Yorkers petitioning the state government in favor of Women's suffrage as early as 1846, the Seneca Falls Convention taking place in 1848, and the state having been home to prominent early women's suffrage activists, such Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Over the following decades, women's suffrage activists worked to convince state legislators to expand voting rights to women. In 1880, New York state passed a law to allow women to vote in school elections. The law granted women partial suffrage by allowing them to register and vote for elected public school officials, but did not allow them to for any other type of elections.² This partial suffrage was reinforced with the passage of an 1892 law, which stated that women could in elections for School Commissioners.³

In the early 1890s, the state's school system was organized into a series of districts, with an elected School Commissioner overseeing the operations of the various public schools within the district and reporting to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Most counties had two or more county school districts and various cities had their own city-level districts.⁴ Allegany County had two districts. The 1st district, also known as the Northern District, consisted of the towns of Allen, Almond, Angelica,

¹ "Women Registered", *Allegany County Republican*, (Wellsville, New York), November 3, 1893, Accessed, October 20, 2022, <https://newspaperarchive.com/wellsville-allegany-county-republican-nov-03-1893-p-3/>; "Tests of Character", *Allegany County Republican*, (Wellsville, New York), November 3, 1893, Accessed, October 20, 2022, <https://newspaperarchive.com/wellsville-allegany-county-republican-nov-03-1893-p-3/>

² "Women Registered", *Allegany County Republican*; Walter Gable, "Timeline of Events in Securing Woman Suffrage in New York State", Seneca County Historian's Office, February 2017, In, thehistorycenter.net, The History Center in Tompkins County, https://thehistorycenter.net/resources/Documents/Digital%20Exhibits/updated_timeline_in_securing_woman_suffrage_in_nys.pdf; Katie Anastus and James Gregory, "Timeline and Map of Woman Suffrage Legislation State by State 1838-1919", *Woman Suffrage Timeline and Map 1838-1919 - Mapping American Social Movements*, University of Washington, Accessed, October 20, 2022, https://depts.washington.edu/moves/WomanSuffrage_map.shtml.

³ Gable, "Timeline of Events in Securing Woman Suffrage in New York State"; Anastus and Gregory, "Timeline and Map of Woman Suffrage Legislation State by State 1838-1919"; "Women May Vote", *Wellsville Daily Reporter*, (Wellsville, New York), October 14, 1893, Accessed, October 21, 2022, <https://newspaperarchive.com/wellsville-daily-reporter-oct-14-1893-p-3/>; "Women, Go and Vote: Miss Susan B. Anthony's Advise in Regard to School Commissioners", *Buffalo Commercial*, (Buffalo, New York), November 4, 1893, Accessed, October, 1893, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/269274725/?terms=allegany%20county%20school%20commissioner&match=1>

⁴ State of New York Department of Public Instruction, *Fourteenth Annual Report of the State Superintendent for the School Year Ending July 25, 1893*, By. James F. Crooker, (Albany: James B. Lyon, 1894), https://books.google.com/books?id=OLIWAAAIAAJ&pg=PA345&lpg=PA345&dq=frank+h+bluestone+Canaseraga+ny&source=bl&ots=fmLHt2vIAa&sig=ACfU3U1cnP1H3ZJW7gqTxJ5vtboq-1TWsw&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwi40rTD_uL6AhVxElkFHV6TCwEQ6AF6BAgrEAM#v=onepage&q=frank%20h%20bluestone%20Canaseraga%20ny&f=false, 345-359

Belfast, Birdsall, Burns, Canadea, Centerville, Granger, Grove, Hume, New Hudson, Rushford, and West Almond. The 2nd District, also known as the Southern District, consisted of the towns of Alfred, Alma, Amity, Andover, Bolivar, Clarksville, Cuba, Friendship, Genesee, Independence, Scio, Ward, Wellsville, Willing, and Wirt.⁵

In the leadup to the 1893 election, 137 women had registered to vote in the town of Angelica. They made up 22.6% of Angelica voters registered to vote in the school commissioners' election.⁶ Throughout Allegany County, women were reported to be registering in fairly high numbers. Writers in the *Allegany County Republican* and the *Buffalo Commercial* took note of this and stated that women voters would likely play a significant role in deciding the results of the district's school commissioner's election.⁷

The women voting in the 1893 election had to choose between three candidates to replace outgoing north district School Commissioner D.D. Dickson.⁸ The Republican Party had nominated Frank H. Bluestone. Bluestone was a teacher from Canaseraga, who the *Allegany County Republican* described as a bright, temperate, honest, well-educated, and practical teacher.⁹ The Prohibition Party nominated Julia E. (Tarbell) Merrill. Merrill was a teacher from Rushford, who was also a temperance activist and active member of the WCTU (Women's Christian Temperance Union).¹⁰ The Democratic Party nominated

⁵ "Tests of Character", *Allegany County Republican*; "Rah! Rah! Cuba!: Republican Majorities All the Way Through", *Cuba Patriot*, (Cuba, New York), November 9, 1893, Accessed, October 21, 2022, https://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn84031258/1893-11-09/ed-1/seq-3/#date1=11%2F01%2F1893&index=3&date2=12%2F31%2F1893&words=COMMISSIONER+SCHOOL&to_year2=1893&searchType=advanced&sequence=0&from_year2=1893&proxdistance=5&page=1&county=Allegany&rows=20&ortext=&proxtext=school+commissioner+&phrasertext=&andtext=&dateFilterType=range&SearchType2=prox5; "Situation in Allegany Excellent for Republicans", *Buffalo Morning Express and Illustrated Buffalo Express*, November 3, 1893, Accessed, October 21, 1893,

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/345242917/?terms=allegany%20county%20school%20commissioner&match=1>; State of New York Department of Public Instruction, *Fourteenth Annual Report of the State Superintendent for the School Year Ending July 25, 1893*, 345-359

⁶ "Women Registered", *Allegany County Republican*

⁷ "Tests of Character", *Allegany County Republican*; "The Vote in the County", *Allegany County Republican*, (Wellsville, New York), November 17, 1893, Accessed, October 20, 2022, <https://newspaperarchive.com/wellsville-allegany-county-republican-nov-17-1893-p-3/>; "Situation in Allegany Excellent for Republicans", *Buffalo Morning Express and Illustrated Buffalo Express*

⁸ "Tests of Character", *Allegany County Republican*; State of New York Department of Public Instruction, *Fourteenth Annual Report of the State Superintendent for the School Year Ending July 25, 1893*, 345-359; "Teacher's Institute", *Allegany County Republican*, (Wellsville, New York), September 22, 1893, Accessed, October 21, 2022, <https://newspaperarchive.com/wellsville-allegany-county-republican-sep-22-1893-p-3/>

⁹ "Tests of Character", *Allegany County Republican*; "The Vote in the County", *Allegany County Republican*; "Francis H. 'Frank' Bluestone (1866-1927)", *Find a Grave*, Accessed, October 22, 2022, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/40974220/francis-h-bluestone>; "Frank H. Bluestone", *Family Search*, Accessed, October 21, 2022, <https://www.familysearch.org/tree/person/details/LV9G-YLB>

¹⁰ Some sources contain typos of her name, such as the *Allegany County Republican* misprinting her last name as Miller and the *Buffalo Morning Express* giving her middle initial as W. instead of E. Though the combination of sources reporting on the election and sources regarding Merrill individually serve confirm that her full name was Julia Etta (Tarbell) Merrill.

"Tests of Character", *Allegany County Republican*; "Situation in Allegany Excellent for Republicans", *Buffalo Morning Express and Illustrated Buffalo Express*; "Allegany County's Actions", *Wellsville Daily Reporter*, (Wellsville, New York), November 9, 1893, Accessed, October 21, 2022, <https://newspaperarchive.com/wellsville-daily-reporter-nov-09-1893-p-3/>; "Birdsall", *Allegany County Republican*, (Wellsville, New York), November 3, 1893, Accessed, October 20, 2022, <https://newspaperarchive.com/wellsville-allegany-county-republican-nov-03-1893-p-3/>; "Higgin's Plurality", *Wellsville Daily Reporter*, (Wellsville, New York), November 9, 1893, Accessed, October 21, 2022, <https://newspaperarchive.com/wellsville-daily-reporter-nov-09-1893-p-1/>; "Julia Ette Tarbell Merrill: Julia Ette Tarbell Merrill (1853-1927) buried in Rushford Cemetery located in Rushford, NY", *People Legacy*, Accessed, October 21, 2022,

https://peoplelegacy.com/julia_ette_tarbell_merrill-7o230K; Women's Christian Temperance Union, *Report of the National Woman's Christian Temperance Union Thirty-Third Annual Convention*, (Hartford: Woman's Temperance Publishing Association, 1906), <https://books.google.com/books?id=zzw2AQAAAJ&pg=PA37&lpg=PA37&dq=julia+merrill+rushford+ny&source=bl&ots=JkyQZrSvz3&sig=ACfU3U036AxtKB1LSzeeRyBoG6pfvd1MaQ&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwia8rzu8Nv6AhVIMikFHXXFAIUQ6AF6BAGhEAM#v=onepage&q=julia%20merrill%20rushford%20ny&f=false>, 28-37; "Julia Ette Tarbell Merrill (1853-1927)", *Find a Grave*, Accessed October 21, 2022, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/96482503/julia-ette-merrill>; "Julia Etta Tarbell", *Family Search*, Accessed, October 21, 2022, <https://www.familysearch.org/tree/person/details/MGBN-8ZS>

Mary E. Crowley. Crowley was a veteran teacher from Hume, who would later go on to help found the Wide Awake Club Library in Fillmore, in 1903.¹¹

Each of the parties and their respective candidates sought to appeal to women voters, in the belief that women voters were crucial to deciding the district's School Commissioner election. While the Republican Party had a strong general advantage in Allegany County in the 1893 elections, the presence of women voters in the School Commissioner election provided an additional area of competition, and women voting heavily for one candidate could conceivably decide the election.¹² Merrill attracted support from members of the Allegany County WCTU and sought to harness the power of pro-temperance women to increase her chance of winning.¹³ The Democratic Party had hoped that women voters might be more inclined to vote for a woman candidate and thus improve Crowley's odds at winning.¹⁴ Bluestone and the county's Republican Party recognized the challenge they faced and sought to appeal to women voters, in the hope that enough women would vote Republican to ensure that they would win.¹⁵

Frank H. Bluestone managed to win the election and would go on to serve his first term as School Commissioner for Allegany County's Northern District. Bluestone had reportedly managed to win over a significant share of women voters in the district.¹⁶ Due to limitations of available sources, it is uncertain exactly how many of the women who registered to vote in Angelica ended up voting, how many of them voted for each candidate, and what share of the overall women vote each candidate ended up getting.¹⁷ Though, it can be seen that the women who registered to vote in Angelica and in the

¹¹ "Tests of Character", *Allegany County Republican*; "Situation in Allegany Excellent for Republicans", *Buffalo Morning Express and Illustrated Buffalo Express*; "Mary Crowley", *Family Search*, Accessed, October 21, 2022, <https://www.familysearch.org/tree/person/details/GCKL-RBD>; "Library History", *Wide Awake Club Library*, Accessed, October 21, 2022, <https://fillmorelibrary.com/history/>.

¹² "Tests of Character", *Allegany County Republican*; "The Vote in the County", *Allegany County Republican*; "Rah! Rah! Cuba!: Republican Majorities All the Way Through", *Cuba Patriot*; "Situation in Allegany Excellent for Republicans", *Buffalo Morning Express and Illustrated Buffalo Express*.

¹³ "Tests of Character", *Allegany County Republican*; "Situation in Allegany Excellent for Republicans", *Buffalo Morning Express and Illustrated Buffalo Express*.

¹⁴ "Tests of Character", *Allegany County Republican*; "Situation in Allegany Excellent for Republicans", *Buffalo Morning Express and Illustrated Buffalo Express*.

¹⁵ "Tests of Character", *Allegany County Republican*; "The Vote in the County", *Allegany County Republican*; "Situation in Allegany Excellent for Republicans", *Buffalo Morning Express and Illustrated Buffalo Express*; "Every Republican, Man or Woman", *Cuba Patriot*, (Cuba, New York), November 2, 1893, Accessed, October 21, 2022, https://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn84031258/1893-11-02/ed-1/seq-2/#date1=11%2F01%2F1893&index=1&date2=12%2F31%2F1893&words=Bluestone&to_year2=1893&searchType=advanced&sequence=0&from_year2=1893&proxdistance=5&page=1&county=Allegany&rows=20&ortext=&proxtext=bluestone&phrasertext=&andtext=&dateFilterType=range&SearchType2=prox5

¹⁶ "The Vote in the County", *Allegany County Republican*; "Situation in Allegany Excellent for Republicans", *Buffalo Morning Express and Illustrated Buffalo Express*; "Birdsall", *Allegany County Republican*, November 3, 1893; "Birdsall", *Allegany County Republican*, (Wellsville, New York), November 10, 1893, Accessed, October 21, 2022, <https://newspaperarchive.com/wellsville-allegany-county-republican-nov-10-1893-p-3/>; Geo. A. Green, "To the Voters of Allegany County", *Wellsville Daily Reporter*, (Wellsville, New York), October 28, 1896, Accessed, October 22, 2022, <https://newspaperarchive.com/wellsville-daily-reporter-oct-28-1896-p-3/>.

¹⁷ Available sources that were found on the 1893 election results only provided partial and limited results for the district's school commissioner election. Charts on town level results from the *Allegany County Republican* and *Cuba Patriot* only lists numbers for two of the three candidates. Other articles provide information on vote totals for some of the towns. An article commenting on the results states that Bluestone had received a large enough share of the female vote that was sufficiently comparable to his share of male voters. Though, these available sources do not state the number of female voters, nor how many of those votes went for each candidate.

"The Vote in the County", *Allegany County Republican*; "Town Votes in Allegany", *Allegany County Republican*, (Wellsville, New York), November 17, 1893, Accessed, October 20, 2022, <https://newspaperarchive.com/wellsville-allegany-county-republican-nov-17-1893-p-3/>; "Allegany County's Actions", *Wellsville Daily Reporter*; "Higgin's Plurality", *Wellsville Daily Reporter*; "Official Vote for Allegany County for 1893", *Cuba Patriot*, (Cuba, New York), November 9, 1893, Accessed, October 21, 2022, https://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn84031258/1893-11-09/ed-1/seq-2/#date1=11%2F01%2F1893&index=5&date2=12%2F31%2F1893&words=commissioners+school+women&to_year2=1893&searchType=advanced&sequence=0&from_year2=1893&proxdistance=&page=1&county=Allegany&rows=20&ortext=&proxtext=&phrasertext=&andtext=school+commissioner+women&dateFilterType=range&SearchType2=all

rest of the district were regarded as an important part of the election, and that those who voted played a part in deciding the overall results of the 1893 School Commissioner for Allegany County's Northern District.¹⁸

List of Angelica Women That Registered to Vote in the 1893 Election:

Lizzie L. Abbey, Capitola Averill, Harriet E. Barnetson, Matilda Bates, Maria Bell, Nellie Benson, Electa Bentley, Olevat Bentley, Rhoda Bentley, Carrie Blauvelt, Hester Blauvelt, Hattie L. Blickwede, Maynette Bliss, Margaret M. Brockett, Alice Buehring, Dorothea Buehring, Harriet E. Bullock, Gardeen Burdick, Rebecca Burdick, Lottie Burr, Mary M. Burr, Flora M. Button, Lena Button, Emma Chamberlain, Caroline Charles, Mary A. Charles, Lucy Clapp, Rhoda Clapp, Frances Clark, Melina Closser, Anna Common, Clara W. Crandall, Emma Crowfoot, Sarah Davis, Ada P. Dean, Jane Dean, Genevive Decker, Jeannie Dening, Jane Doty, Mary Doud, DeFrancie Dudley, Electa Dye, Cora Eldridge, Mattie J. Engle, Emma Evans, Jane A. Farnum, Anna Fich, Nancy Franklin, Lydia Freeborn, Elizabeth Gibson, Etta Gibson, Ellen Graham, Julia Graham, Mary Graham, Amelia Green, Caroline Green, Laura A. Green, Sarah A. Green, Sarah T. Gregory, Agnes Grunder, Eilen A. Haight, Sarah A. Haight, Phoebe Hendrick, Alice Holleran, Maggie J. Holleran, Augusta Hooker, Nellie M. Hooker, Polly Hooker, Nellie Hull, Ellen M. Isaman, Mary E. Isaman, Amy Jennings, Jane Jennings, Elizabeth Latham, Renia Lilly, Emma Lontz, Bertha Lowell, Harriet Lowell, Elizabeth S. Lytle, Lizzie J. Lytle, Electa Mapes, Cora A. McGibeny, Mary A. McGibeny, Mary E. McGibeny, Anna McEntee, Delilah Miles, Mary E. Milliman, Mary Moot, Harriet Morton, Emma Nichols, Anna M. Norris, Cora E. Norton, Della Oakes, Harriet Osgood, Rowena C. Osgood, Lottie Osgood, Polly A. Palmer, May Phippeau, Ethelda Post, Mary Post, Frances Renwick, Julia S. Richardson, Clara Robbins, Ella M. Rumpff, Anna Ryan, Jennie Sanborn, Sarah Scott, Mary Shattuck, Mae Scheanck, Clara A.H.H. Smith, Imogene Smith, Julia I. Smith, Mary E. Smith, Sarah Smith, Nellie Starkeather, Ada Thornton, Adah Travis, Sarah W. Turner, Elizabeth Vandeventer, Alta Wakefield, Esther Weaver, Nellie Weaver, Amelia Wafler, Fannie Walker, Janette Walker, Phoebe Walker, Louisa Warner, Ellen Way, Lucy A. Way, Elizabeth I. Weir, Almina C. White, Mary E. White, Hattie I. Willis, Julia Willis, Margaret L. Winchip, Maggie Worden.¹⁹

¹⁸ "Women Registered", *Allegany County Republican*; "The Vote in the County", *Allegany County Republican*; "Situation in Allegany Excellent for Republicans", *Buffalo Morning Express and Illustrated Buffalo Express*

¹⁹ "Women Registered", *Allegany County Republican*

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