

THE 14TH CULTURAL CONFERENCE OF THE LUXEMBOURG AMERICAN CULTURAL SOCIETY

Votes for Women!



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**LUXEMBOURG
AMERICAN**
CULTURAL SOCIETY & CENTER

**THURSDAY 6 AUGUST 2020
FRIDAY 7 AUGUST 2020
A VIRTUAL WEBINAR**



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Conference Description

The conference this year celebrates the centenary of suffrage movements in both Luxembourg and the United States. Universal suffrage was adopted into law in Luxembourg in 1919, and women's suffrage was ratified into law in the United States in 1920. While this conference is a celebration and review of past events, it is also meant to be a continuation of the discussion around suffrage and voting rights. Our expert speakers and their topics show how individuals worked together to create movements and built upon each other's accomplishments. It is not a coincidence that women's suffrage was a topic of discussion on two continents at the same time. This movement showed the commonalities seen in different communities throughout the world. The speakers in this conference will dig deeper into the history of these suffrage movements to show the similarities and differences of events happening at the same time on different continents.

We have five speakers this year who are experts in their field. On the first day of this conference we have three excellent speakers. The first speaker for this conference is Dr. Renée Wagener, a prominent Luxembourgish historian and journalist, who will be presenting an overview of the universal suffrage movement in Luxembourg before focusing on women's suffrage. She will be followed by Dr. Genevieve McBride, an expert on the women's suffrage movement in the State of Wisconsin. Dr. McBride's presentation was previously recorded for the Wisconsin League of Women Voters, who have graciously allowed us to use the video. Ending day one of the conference is Lizzie Hjelle, whose current research focuses on representations of minoritized groups in institutional archives. She will be presenting on the role of immigrants in the U.S. suffrage movement. The second day of the conference will focus on individual, influential women. Dr. Wagner will start with a presentation on the role of Grand-duchess Marie Adelheid in the Luxembourg suffrage movement. The second presentation by Katie Woods, a Public Historian working for the National Parks of Boston, will delve into the history of Lucy Stone, an often-overlooked leader of the U.S. movement. Lastly, Megan Woods, also a Public Historian working for the National Parks of Boston, will be focusing on the continued efforts of women's rights through the life of Perle Mesta.

Due to the Covid-19 global pandemic, the LACS Board of Directors made the difficult decision to hold this annual conference as a virtual event for everyone's safety. We hope you enjoy this conference in this different format, which allows us to bring more content to you this year.

Sincerely,
Serena Stuetgen
LACS Museum Curator and Conference Host

Conference Schedule

THURSDAY 6 AUGUST 2020 (CENTRAL STANDARD TIME)

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| 12:00 PM | Welcome – LACS Curator Serena Stuetzgen |
| 12:15 PM | A Question of Equality: The Introduction of Women’s Suffrage in Luxembourg – Dr. Renée Wagener |
| 1:15 PM | Break (15 minutes) |
| 1:30 PM | ‘Forward’ Women in Wisconsin – Dr. Genevieve McBride |
| 2:30 PM | Break (15 minutes) |
| 2:45 PM | The Role of Immigrants in the Suffrage Movement – Lizzie Hjelle |
| 3:30 PM | Conclusion of Day One – LACS Curator Serena Stuetzgen |

FRIDAY 7 AUGUST 2020 (CENTRAL STANDARD TIME)

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| 12:00 PM | Welcome – LACS Curator Serena Stuetzgen |
| 12:15 PM | Grand Duchess Marie Adelheid, the Crisis of Monarchy, and the Introduction of Women’s Suffrage in Luxembourg after World War I – Dr. Renée Wagener |
| 1:00 PM | Break |
| 1:15 PM | Lucy Stone: The Forgotten Suffragist – Katie Woods |
| 2:00 PM | Break |
| 2:15 PM | More than the ‘Hostess with the Mostess’: Perle Mesta as Political Influencer and Diplomat – Megan Woods |
| 3:00 PM | Conclusion of Day Two – LACS Curator Serena Stuetzgen |

Conference Presenters

In Order of Appearance



**Dr. Renée
Wagener**

Dr. Renée Wagener is a Luxembourgish historian and journalist. Her doctoral dissertation treated the history of Judaism and Antisemitism in Luxembourg. She has collaborated on different research projects on Luxembourgish history at the University of Luxembourg, her research areas being social history of 19th and 20th century Luxembourg, gender history, and emancipation movements (women, workers, Jews). She has worked as a lecturer on oral history at the University of Luxembourg. Since 2012, she is a collaborator on behalf of Associate Professor Dr. Benoît Majerus (University of Luxembourg) in the European network "Societies under German Occupation – Experiences and Everyday Life in WORLD WAR II." She is now co-commissioner for an exhibition on the hundredth anniversary of the introduction of universal suffrage in Luxembourg, organized by the Luxembourgish Parliament and the National Museum for History and Art. She is a member of the administrative board of the weekly newspaper "woxx", of the "Fondation Lydie Schmit" and of the "Établissement de radiodiffusion socio-culturel 100,7."



**Dr. Genevieve
G. McBride**

Dr. Genevieve G. McBride is a Professor Emerita of History at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, with a focus on women's history in Wisconsin and the United States. She earned a bachelor's degree from UW-Milwaukee, a master's degree from Marquette University, and a doctorate from UW-Madison. She has received awards for historical research for numerous scholarly articles and books, including her book *On Wisconsin Women: Working for Their Rights from Settlement to Suffrage*. She was editor of an anthology on Wisconsin women's history for the Wisconsin Historical Society and served on its Board of Curators. She was the sole Wisconsin member on the founding advisory board of the proposed National Women's History Museum in Washington, D.C. and currently is the sole Wisconsin member on the experts advisory board of the Woman Suffrage Centennial Commission of the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

Conference Presenters

In Order of Appearance



Lizzie
Hjelle

Lizzie Hjelle is a graduate student and teaching assistant at the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee, where she is currently working towards her Master’s in Library and Information Science and Master’s in Women’s and Gender Studies. Her research focuses on representations of minoritized groups in institutional archives and how archival materials can support social justice in instruction. She received her BA in English and Gender, Women’s, and Sexuality Studies from Gustavus Adolphus College in 2017.



Katie
Woods

Katie Woods is a Public Historian with the National Parks of Boston, researching under-told stories at the Park and sharing them through public programs and digital content. Katie received her Master of Arts degree in Public History from Northeastern University in May 2019. She also received a Certificate in the Digital Humanities from Northeastern for the digital project focused on Luxembourg/U.S. World War II history and memory, *From Grateful Friends*, which she collaborated on with Megan Woods. Katie has previously worked at other public history and educational organizations, including the Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the United States Senate and Facing History and Ourselves. Katie also worked with the LACS as a Citizenship Advocate and currently serves on the LACS Board of Directors.



Megan
Woods

Megan Woods is a Public Historian with the National Parks of Boston, conducting research and creating digital materials that will help expand the narratives currently presented at the Park. In the spring of 2019, she received her Master of Arts degree in Public History from Northeastern University and obtained a Certificate in the Digital Humanities. While at Northeastern, she helped develop a digital project recognizing the relationship between Luxembourgers and American soldiers during World War II. Over the past few years, Megan has worked at other public history institutions, such as the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum and the Hingham Historical Society. Megan previously worked with LACS as a Citizenship Advocate and currently serves on the LACS Board of Directors.

Presentation Descriptions

In Order of Appearance

A Question of Equality: The Introduction of Women's Suffrage in Luxembourg

Dr. Renée Wagener

In 2019, Luxembourg celebrated the centenary of the adoption of universal suffrage, which brought political rights not only to a large part of Luxembourgish men (who had until then been excluded through the census system), but also to all Luxembourgish women. The presentation will briefly describe the historical context of the suffrage debate in Luxembourg in the 19th and beginning of 20th century before focusing on the introduction of women's suffrage. It will explore reasons for the absence of a strong women's suffragist movement, outline the influence of British and North American women's movements on public opinion in Luxembourg and dwell on the role of World War I in social change. Finally, the presentation will describe the concrete political debate on women's suffrage from 1917 to 1919.

'Forward' Women in Wisconsin

Dr. Genevieve McBride

Wisconsin is known as the home of the Progressive party. But, in the words of a suffragist as late as 1912, "the last thing a man becomes progressive about is the activities of his wife." In this presentation based on her book, *On Wisconsin Women*, Dr. McBride traces women's work in reform movements in the state's politics and especially in its press. Even before Wisconsin became a state in 1848, women's news and opinions appeared in abolitionist journals and "temperance sheets," if often anonymously. However, the first paper in Wisconsin published under a woman's name was boycotted by Milwaukee printers and failed in 1853. For fifty years, from passage of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments that wrote women out of the Constitution to the state's historic ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1919, Wisconsin woman suffragists never were at a loss for words nor a newspaper to print them. Among women who would be heard were Mathilde Franziska Anneke, the first woman publisher in Wisconsin; Emma Brown, editor and publisher in Fort Atkinson of the nation's longest-lasting "temperance sheet;" Lavinia Goodell, a journalist and suffragist who became the state's first woman lawyer; Emma Bascom, leader of temperance activists and woman suffragists; the Reverend Olympia Brown, who had stumped for suffrage with Susan B. Anthony and Elisabeth Cady Stanton in the 1850s and led state suffragists to a historic win, and then a devastating loss, but lived to vote in 1920; Belle Case La Follette, her husband's campaign manager, who also canvassed the state for suffrage; and Theodora Winton Youmans, the most prominent woman journalist in Wisconsin for decades, leader of state clubwomen and then the last president of the Wisconsin Woman Suffrage Association and founder of the Wisconsin League of Women Voters. McBride brings these and many more women's voices vividly to life, in their own words, on their lifelong work for their rights.

The Role of Immigrants in the Suffrage Movement

Lizzie Hjelle

This presentation will focus on the role of immigrants within the U.S. Suffrage Movement and how traditional lenses used to conceptualize the history of feminist activism in the U.S. would often overlook the importance of immigrants within the movement. We will examine the ways the Suffrage movement utilized and relied on immigrant labor and support. Also, we will examine how the anti-immigrant sentiment held by many prominent suffrage leaders created rifts within the overall movement.

Presentation Descriptions

In Order of Appearance



Photograph from LACS

Grand Duchess Marie Adelheid, the Crisis of Monarchy, and the Introduction of Women's Suffrage in Luxembourg after World War I

Dr. Renée Wagener

The adoption of universal suffrage in Luxembourg in 1919 brought political rights not only to a large part of Luxembourgish men, but also to all Luxembourgish women. This presentation will explore the role of Grand Duchess Marie Adelheid, who reigned from 1912 until her abdication in 1919, as well as the influence of the first World War.



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Lucy Stone: The Forgotten Suffragist

Katie Woods

When we think of the U.S. women's suffrage movement, we often remember the two women considered the pillars of the movement: Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Yet in the first decades of the long road to women's political representation, there was a third, equally significant leader—Lucy Stone. Among the first women to obtain a college degree at Oberlin College, Lucy Stone used her education to become a gifted speaker on both the anti-slavery and women's rights lecture circuits before formally entering the fight for women's suffrage. Similar to Anthony and Stanton, Lucy Stone became a leading figure in the national suffrage movement, working to organize both men and women for the cause. But when a moment of reckoning came to the movement, Lucy Stone took a different path from Stanton and Anthony. This path demonstrated her dedication to the fight for greater equality and universal suffrage, but it also led to her diminished status in our nation's memory of women's suffrage. In this session, we will explore the life and contributions of Lucy Stone to the early women's rights movement, as well as consider why so few Americans know of her today.

Presentation Descriptions

In Order of Appearance



Photograph from LACS

More than the ‘Hostess with the Mostess’: Perle Mesta as Political Influencer and Diplomat

Megan Woods

While the ratification of the 19th Amendment in 1920 gave women the right to vote, the fight for other women’s rights continued. In practice and in law, women saw that they remained unequal to men in many aspects of society, and they continued to work for greater equality. One woman who championed the fight for women’s rights was Perle Mesta. Frequently known as the “Hostess with the Mostess” due to Irving Berlin’s musical based on her life experiences, Perle Mesta learned how to use her position as society hostess to influence politics. This ultimately led to her appointment as the first U.S. Ambassador to Luxembourg. While many career politicians doubted her ability to serve because she had no prior experience in foreign affairs, Mesta’s background provided her with tools to be an influential diplomat. This session will explore Perle Mesta’s political evolution and how she utilized her position in Washington D.C.’s society to advance women’s rights. This session will also highlight her role as U.S. Ambassador to Luxembourg and her unique approach to her position that helped strengthen the relationship between the two countries

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See You In 2021!

**Announcing the
15th Annual LACS Cultural
Conference**

13 AUGUST 2021

WHAT'S DNA GOT TO DO WITH IT?

This genealogy-based conference will explore the effects of DNA on the average family history researcher and how the country of Luxembourg fits into the DNA landscape. Join us for what will be a fascinating and practical conference!