

ROCHESTER HISTORY

Edited by Ruth Rosenberg-Naparsteck
City Historian

Vol. LVII

Fall, 1995

No. 4

Failure Is Impossible The Legacy of Susan B. Anthony

by Ruth Rosenberg-Naparsteck





*Above: Susan B. Anthony and her family moved to Rochester in 1845 arriving on a canal boat at Fitzhugh Street.
(Rochester Public Library)*

*Cover: Susan B. Anthony stands on the porch of her home at 17 Madison Street in this popular undated postcard.
(Rochester Public Library)*

ROCHESTER HISTORY, published quarterly by Rochester Public Library. Address correspondence to City Historian, Rochester Public Library, 115 South Avenue, Rochester, NY 14604.

Subscriptions to the quarterly Rochester History are \$6.00 per year by mail. \$4.00 per year to people over 55 years of age and to non-profit institutions and libraries outside of Monroe County. \$3.60 per year each for orders of 50 or more copies. Foreign subscriptions \$10.00.

Rochester April 27, 1846.

Gentlemen.

I have just received your favor of the 25th inst. offering me the superintendence of the Female Department of your Academy.

I have decided upon the acceptance of your terms, and will be at Canajoharie in time to commence school on the 7th of May next.

Yours Respectfully,
Susan B. Anthony.

Joshua Read
Livingston Speaker
George G. Johnson

Above: Susan B. Anthony's letter accepting her first teaching position. It reads "Rochester April 27, 1846. Gentlemen. I have just received your favor of the 25th past offering me the superintendence of the Female Department of your Academy. I have decided upon the acceptance of your terms and will be at Canajoharie in time to commence school in the 7th of May next. Yours respectfully, Susan B. Anthony. Joshua Read, Livingston Speaker, George G. Johnson, (Collection of Susan B. Anthony House).

The Young Anthony Family

In her later years Susan B. Anthony often reminisced about her early life. She had become one of the most famous women in the world, respected and admired even by those who opposed her progressive views on the status of women. Her opinions were sought out by reporters and leaders. She had accomplished so much for the cause of women's rights, yet she was painfully aware of how much work there was still to do.

Anthony was born in the Berkshire Hills in Adams, Massachusetts on February 15, 1820. Her family was well off financially and could afford to educate their seven children, even the daughters, which was not a common practice in those days. Anthony attended Deborah Moulson's Seminary for Females in Philadelphia and at the age of seventeen, left home to become a teacher. She earned one dollar plus room and board

each week. In 1838, her father's textile mill was lost in a financial collapse. He auctioned off all of his property to satisfy his creditors and moved from Battenville to Hardscrabble and finally to Rochester in 1845 to start a new life.

On November 14 the family arrived at Fitzhugh Street aboard a canal line boat. Having less than ten dollars, the Anthonys could not stay at the nearby National Hotel. Daniel Anthony harnessed the grey horse and wagon the family brought with them and, despite the cold and exhaustion, the family set out over muddy roads for their farm three miles west of the city at what is today Brooks Avenue and Genesee Park Boulevard. The next day they returned for their belongings. Rhoda DeGarmo and a few other Quaker families began meeting at the Anthony home, breaking up what the family expected to be a long first winter among strangers.

Susan boarded with her cousin, Margaret, while she taught in Canajoharie at the Canajoharie Academy from 1843 to 1849 and left when her cousin died. There she became aware of the disparity between men's and women's wages since she earned only one quarter of a man's salary. She had not attended the first Womens Rights Convention in Seneca Falls in 1848, but her parents and sister, Mary, attended the meeting that followed in Rochester. When Anthony left Canajoharie, she returned to the family farm in Rochester.

When her father died in 1862, the family moved to a house at 17 Madison Street and the farm was sold. It was this home that Anthony came to restore herself after long speaking tours. Here she was among friends, neighbors and relatives. She could be herself. Her friend, Jean Brooks Greenleaf, commented on how depressed Anthony seemed one year after spending the hot summer of 1890 working in South Dakota. Anthony had thrown her heart and soul into winning the vote for the struggling pioneer women there, but the movement was defeated. Greenleaf found her sitting alone in the doorway of the house, apparently lost in thought about the defeated campaign. Greenleaf recalled, "I shall never forget it; the agony on that face closed my lips; I could only take her hand in silence and stand by her side until she had controlled herself..."¹

Anthony often reflected on her campaigns from her rocking chair in her upstairs sitting room. Greenleaf was proud of her friend and said she recognized her as unquestionably the leader of the womens rights movement. Greenleaf said, "I daily rejoice that here was one eminently fitted for such leadership as would interfere with her following the call of duty anywhere without injury to her own heart or the welfare of others. I

never heard from her a sigh or complaint over what to me would have been torture, the almost continual absence from home, and I deemed her quite indifferent to it" ²

But for several years Mary leased out the Madison Street house except for a suite of rooms and she and Anthony boarded next door. Anthony was heartbroken. She went to Greenleaf to ask her to persuade a reluctant Mary to keep house again. When Greenleaf conferred with Mary and the Political Equality Club, Mary returned to housekeeping. Greenleaf remarked about Susan, "I never saw a happier woman. When I had tasted the delicious bread she made, had eaten a dinner of her own cooking, and seen the deep joy she took in her home life, I realized as never before the sacrifice she had made and was yet making..." ³

Greenleaf recalled, "My heart gave a throb of sympathetic pain. Here was this grand woman giving up, year after year, the home life she so much loved, for what? Not for pecuniary gain, for there was none. Not for love of applause and the petting of the rich and influential, for such had never come to her. But because she so firmly believed in the underlying principle upon which the government of this country rests that she was willing to give up anything to see it carried out;..." ⁴

It saddened Greenleaf to see that Anthony enjoyed domestic life, but had no time for it. Rather than complaining about her self-sacrifice, Anthony took great joy in the time she had at home. After entertaining, seventy-one-year-old Anthony entered into her diary, "... it makes me so happy to return some of the courtesies I have had in their beautiful home... I got the dinner alone—; broiled steak, potatoes, sweet corn, tomatoes and peach pudding, with a cup of tea. All said it was good and I enjoyed it hugely. How I love to receive in my home and at my own table!" ⁵



*Susan B. Anthony with Elizabeth Cady Stanton.
(Collection of Rochester Public Library).*

Carrying the Banner

Susan B. Anthony was committed to her causes, but shy at first about public speaking. She was tutored by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and other more experienced women in the movement. When she became caught

up in her message, she lost the shyness and spoke with the boldness of a believer. She once instructed a group of women: "Just let me show you girls how to make the people in the back of the house hear. Just be natural. Every woman in this house has voice enough to fill the whole hall, if she will only let it out. Now, don't put your papers before your mouth, this way. (she demonstrates), but hold them out this way. (holding her papers at arm's length) and talk just like you would talk at home. If you were calling your son from across the street you wouldn't go to the door and drop your head down until it cramped your vocal cords and say in a low voice: 'Jim.'"

"You would go to the door, throw your head back, get your lungs full of air, give your vocal cords a show, and call: 'Jim!'"

"He would hear you too... Perfect naturalness is always right." ⁶

Susan's two brothers, Merritt and Daniel, were equally committed to social causes. They went with John Brown to Kansas to populate the ter-

ritory with abolitionists who would vote to make Kansas a slave-free state. There were many attacks on settlements of abolitionists as well as anti-abolitionists. The territory became known as "bloody Kansas." Daniel (also called D. R.) was nearly killed in one attack when shot in Leavenworth. Susan traveled to Kansas to nurse him back to health.



*Mary S. Anthony, sister of Susan B. Anthony, about the turn of the century.
(Collection of Susan B. Anthony House).*

Susan could be quite gracious in meeting opposition; but she could also be caustic in her remarks. At a time when it was against the law in many parts of the country to discuss reproduction, Susan advocated family planning and birth control. She said education of men and women was the only way to protect the health of women and the welfare of children who might be born into poverty. She believed that families that were too large were not only a "wrong to the children, but a wrong as well to the mothers who must spend the prime of their life in toil and worry that make them old before their time. If you want to know the effect of overmuch child bearing on the health of women... just look back to the day of the Pilgrim fathers and the Puritans. Nearly all of them had two or three wives, because the women who furnished them with families of ten and thirteen children died one after another. The chief difference between them and the Mormons... was that they drove their wives tandem, while the Mormons drive theirs abreast." ⁷

She showed a gracious manner when she invited some people to her home following a meeting. She showed her guests around her house and recalled stories of earlier campaigns as she showed momentos. After listening to Susan's stories and seeing her home, a leader in the anti-suffrage movement identified herself and said, "Perhaps you may think it

very impertinent of me to come to see you after you know who I am; but I had a great curiosity to do so and I trust you are not offended."

Susan made the woman feel welcome and the leader replied "I suppose you think I ought to join the suffrage cause."

Susan replied, "Not until your heart and brain tell you it is the right thing to do." ⁸

She also had a sense of humor that carried her through the exhausting and frustrating times that would have caused others to give up. One day when a newspaper commented that the bonnet she was wearing made her look like Methuselah's youngest daughter, she replied, "If I had a vote and he wanted it he wouldn't care if I looked like Methuselah's oldest daughter." ⁹



*Lucy and Daniel Anthony, parents of Susan B. Anthony
about the mid-nineteenth century.
(Collection of Susan B. Anthony House).*

The *Post Express* wrote that except for a brief experiment with the Bloomer costume, Anthony was always well dressed. She wore modest soft black gowns that trailed the floor. She loved soft satins and silks. Her sleeves and bodice were often decorated with point lace. Sometimes she wore a small jeweled pin and fancy hair combs.

It is difficult to know why Anthony was singled out for more ridicule than other suffragists. There was a lot of attention on the clothing of the suffragists. The *Post Express* reported, "The motive probably was to frighten women into the belief that brains and beauty were incompati-

ble." The paper speculated that Anthony was singled out because, "In her day it was a disgrace and a humiliation to be an 'old maid.'" ¹⁰

Improving Womens Lives

Susan is better known for her work in the suffrage movement, but she also was a founder of the Women's Educational and Industrial Union in Rochester, organized in 1893. One of the leaders with her, Helen Barrett Montgomery, opened a lunch and rest room downtown for working girls after they heard of a young woman who fainted in the street. The Union trained women for jobs and independent living. Other branches of the Union were formed in other cities.



*The Anthony family gathered for a reunion at Adams, Massachusetts in June of 1897. Susan B. Anthony is seated in the center wearing the necklace. Her niece, Lucy stands behind her at her left in the light colored dress. Mary is on the far right in the same row as Susan B. Anthony.
(Collection of Susan B. Anthony House).*

She also helped to open the University of Rochester to women. The University was concerned that the admission of women would damage its academic reputation and refused the women admission. It then agreed to admit women, but at a prohibitive cost of \$100,000. It was later reduced to \$50,000. Over a two year campaign to raise funds, Helen Barrett Montgomery led women to raise \$40,000. In June of 1900 the Board at the University agreed to admit women if another \$10,000 could be raised by September. Over that summer another \$2,000 was acquired but still the campaign was \$8,000 short of its goal. Susan B. Anthony took charge of raising the final amount and received \$2,000 each from her sister, Mary, Sarah Willis, the Rev. and Mrs. William Channing Gannett. To make the final \$2,000 she pledged her own life insurance. As a result of Anthony's efforts, women were admitted to the University of Rochester in 1900.

Anthony was firmly committed to temperance as well. She felt alcohol was a major cause of wife and child abuse as well as some poverty. Sometimes one of her commitments was hinged to another as in the abolition of slavery and womens suffrage. Anthony worked for decades to end slavery. She believed that if the slaves were freed and granted the right to vote, women would most certainly be included. This issue forced a split in the suffrage movement as Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton opposed the Fifteenth Amendment on the grounds that it did not include women, while Frederick Douglass and Lucy Stone supported it believing that a continued battle for womens rights would lead to success for all.

Anthony worked with Stanton to gain property rights for women. Women's property, even their earned wages, became their husband's. Women all over New York state collected 60,000 signatures and presented them to the state legislature. Stanton was ridiculed as she gave her speech advocating women's property rights. Finally in March of 1860, New York state passed legislation building on the 1848 Married Woman's Property Act which allowed women to own real and personal property. Now they could keep their own wages as well and could give or deny consent for their children's apprenticeships.

Thirty years later, in January of 1894, a meeting was called in Rochester to discuss the inappropriateness of some of the state laws concerning women. Over the past years women had won the right to own property but then were paying taxes without representation. It was time for women to be granted the right to vote. City Hall was nearly filled with men and women demanding justice through the granting of women's suffrage. Judge George Danforth presided over the meeting intended to bring an amendment before the next state constitutional convention

allowing women in New York the right to vote. The discussion was led by Dr. A. M. Moore, Sr., Eugene T. Curtis, Rev. Asa Saxe of the First Universalist Church, Susan B. Anthony and other women.



*The silk for this dress was given by the women of the Church of Latter Day Saints to Susan B. Anthony.
(Collection of Susan B. Anthony House).*

The Baltimore Convention

On February 3, 1906 Susan B. Anthony attended the National American Woman Suffrage Association annual convention in Baltimore. It was difficult for her sister, Mary, and her friends to keep the 86 year-old Anthony from overtaxing her strength at the Baltimore convention. Friends persuaded Anthony to remain in her room during the daily sessions, but there were continuous consultations on every piece of business. When Anthony heard that the treasurer was appealing for money to fund the work of the coming year, she insisted on attending and being the first to the platform. She was intent on winning the vote for the women of Oregon. She stood, held out her purse and said, "I want to begin by giving you my purse. Just before I left Rochester, they gave me a birthday party and a present of \$86. I suppose they wanted me to do what I liked with the money, and I'd like to send it to Oregon." ¹¹

Anthony was looking forward to going to New York as the guest of honor at a dinner sponsored by the Interurban Equality Council of Greater New York on the 20th of February. But the Baltimore Convention she attended was too taxing for her. She became ill and had to go home. On the night of the dinner, rumors circulated that she had died. Anthony joked with a reporter who had come to check out the story, that she would survive her biography. Unfortunately, the illness that drove her home developed into pneumonia. She expected to recover in a week, but instead she developed double pneumonia. Her strength declined, then improved as she made plans for future work with her friend, Rev. Anna Howard Shaw. The following day she fell into a coma and spoke at times deliriously. "... the mind of Miss Anthony was apparently vigorous in preaching her life gospel. Oregon seemed to be one of the places visited in the kaleidoscopic mental voyage," a Rochester paper reported.¹²



The farm home of the Anthonys was located near Brooks Avenue and Genesee Park Blvd. three miles west of what was once Rochester. (Collection of Susan B. Anthony House).

Telegrams were sent to her family and letters to close friends informing them that Anthony's life was nearing an end. Her sister, Mary, sat at her bedside for days and nights, hardly ever leaving her. In Anthony's final hours, Mary was awakened to come to her side. Mary, her nieces Lucy Anthony and Margaret McLean Baker, Rev. Anna Howard Shaw, attending doctor Marcena Sherman Ricker and nurses Mabel Nichols and S. A. Shanks sat at Anthony's bedside. She died peacefully on March 13, 1906 without regaining consciousness. The *Rochester Post Express* reported that though Anthony's death was expected, it was most difficult for her friends to accept. "Had there been consciousness the blow would not have fallen so heavily, but that the one who had led and cheered and stimulated them always should be unresponsive at the severest ordeal of

their long friendship was a trial of their spirit that broke them at the end."

Susan's last speech, given at Baltimore less than two weeks before she became ill, left us with the courageous, rousing words that continue to carry the cause of women's rights today, "Failure is Impossible." Susan died a decade and a half before women gained the right to vote nationwide, but she lived to see four western states, one by one, pass legislation giving women the vote.

Though she was encouraged by individual winning of states, she was cautious about the commitment of the next generation to take up and carry the banner for woman's suffrage. When a delegate at the Baltimore convention said to Mary that Susan had spoken as strongly as she had fifteen years ago, Mary replied, "Susan's voice is as good as ever; but she didn't say the right thing tonight. She has fallen into a bad habit lately of alluding to the past generation as superior to the present. I tell her that that is a sure sign of approaching age." ¹³



*At the Lafayette Opera House in Washington, D.C. school children presented Susan B. Anthony with eighty roses on her eightieth birthday in 1900. This life-size oil painting by Sarah J. Eddy captures the spirit of that occasion. The painting is now on loan from the Smithsonian Institution to the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, University of Rochester.
(Copy photograph from collection of Rochester Public Library).*

Anthony never lost faith that nationwide suffrage for women would become a reality. She hoped that women like her friend, Anna Howard Shaw, would see the cause through to success. Winning Oregon was on her mind at the time of her collapse. She promised her friends, "to be with you when you win in Oregon and in every campaign for victory."

Anthony fought a lifetime for social causes. One supporter believed that though Anthony had won advances for women, particularly in western states where women had suffrage, it was difficult to determine which advances could be credited to Anthony and which to the changing times. The invention of the typewriter had opened secretarial and clerical positions to women. Sewing machines and other household improvements had lessened women's workload at home somewhat and wealthier women were able to become educated. The supporter claimed, "The typewriter, to cite a mere mechanical contrivance, doubtless has more to

do with business chances for girls than the efforts of scores of reformers.”¹⁴

Anthony's battle for women's rights spanned more than a half century. Women's opportunities to take advantage of the advances in the workplace were in part created by Anthony and her fellow workers. Perhaps women who had grown up not knowing society's resistance to women's place in education and the workplace could not understand what Anthony had experienced.



Susan B. Anthony in a formal pose.
(Collection of Rochester Public Library).

Anthony had done much to attack convention and complacency in society. She worked through the men in power to achieve change and bristled when asked if she wouldn't be more successful by converting women to the cause. Rev. Anna Howard Shaw told the story of the loss of the California suffrage vote- what she called the 'lost star' on their flag. She said she herself learned that nearly every man who had voted against suffrage was told to do so by a woman. It seemed to Shaw that men were influenced by the women who did not see the necessity of their vote.

In November, 1896, at the Livingston Hotel in Rochester, Joseph T. Alling spoke to the Political Equality Club of the changing view of woman's sphere, the changing conventional thinking that Anthony spent

half a century remodeling.

Alling said:

*It is claimed by some that woman's sphere is the home. There is a growing sentiment that the government of a city is not so much a matter of politics as it is of home. The care of the streets and the schools is but an enlargement of the duties of housekeeping. I want to see women take a hand at housekeeping in municipal affairs. I should like to see a good sensible woman on the board of education. I would make an appeal not only to the sense of justice of men in support of this cause, but also to the consciences of women. It is the duty of women to unite with others in securing the rights you desire.*¹⁵



*Susan B. Anthony at the age of thirty-six.
(Collection of Rochester Public Library).*

The Funeral of A Great Woman

On the front door of 17 Madison Street a wreath of violets hung to distinguish it from days past. Only the closest friends and family were admitted to the house where Mary Anthony walked from room to room

among bouquets, letters and telegrams. Friends could not keep her quiet. Rev. Anna Howard Shaw was too distraught to see anyone. Neighbor women quietly knocked on the back door to offer their condolences and services.

In the front parlor, Anthony's body lay in a casket. Rays of sunlight played on the floor diffused through the tree outside the window. Following a quiet vigil the casket was carried through the front door to a waiting horse-drawn hearse that rolled slowly past the barber shop where Anthony had voted, past mourners lining the sidewalks that Susan had once walked briskly. Out of respect, people drew down their window shades as the hearse passed. Two carriages bearing relatives and friends flanked the hearse which stopped at the Central Presbyterian Church on Plymouth Avenue and Church Street. Anthony's own Unitarian Church could not hold the crowd that was expected to file past her coffin for two hours on March 15. Her close friend, Rev. W. C. Gannett, Dr. Charles Albertson of the Central Church and other clergy conducted the service.

Crowds had begun to gather early. The family was ushered into the church and seated near the gray casket. Palms, ferns and tropical plants surrounded the casket. The pall bearers were Anthony's two nephews, Wendell Mosher and Daniel Anthony and four trustees of the Unitarian Church, J. Vincent Alexander, Eugene T. Curtis, George Herbert Smith and Dr. H. W. Hoyt. Women students of the University of Rochester served as honorary pall bearers. For two hours businessmen, housewives, laborers, financiers and influential people passed by the casket to pay their last respects. The *Post Express* stated that the number of blacks attending was remarkable. The paper noted that one elderly black man stood by the casket a moment, then pulled a leaf from the funeral wreath and said, "I'll keep this to remember Miss Anthony by." ¹⁶

Anthony was buried in the family plot at Mt. Hope Cemetery not far from her friend, Frederick Douglass.



*Susan B. Anthony flanked by Mary Thayer Sanford Crossett
on her right and Mary Anthony on her left.
(Collection of Rochester Public Library).*

Susan B. Anthony's Legacy

The 19th amendment, also known as the Susan B. Anthony Amendment, was passed on August 26, 1920, more than a decade after Anthony's death. The house at 17 Madison Street was purchased in 1945 with funds raised from across the nation by the Rochester Federation of Women's Clubs. Anthony had helped to found the club. In 1966 it became the first building in Rochester to be designated a National Historic Landmark. Today the house is the anchor of the city's Madison-King Preservation District which is bounded by Madison, King, Silver and West Main Streets. What was part of the Bush and King Tract shows up on the 1834 map of the newly incorporated city of Rochester. Madison Street was soon laid out but no buildings showed on an 1839 map. Mechanics Square, nearly a full acre, was laid out as a neighborhood park. By 1842, School Number 2, where Mary Anthony later served as principal, was on the map near Mechanics Square. In 1875 the criss- cross sidewalk pattern is shown on the plat map and what had been Mechanics Square became Madison Square. By 1904 a flower petal design by the Olmsted brothers replaced the simpler criss-cross sidewalk in the square. In 1974 the park was renamed Susan B. Anthony Square. The park was renovated in 1982 and restored to the Olmsted design in 1994.

There was not much development in the area considered to be on the outer boundaries of the expanding city, but the Tract was not far from the Erie Canal. The Tonawanda Railroad, running between Rochester and Batavia, opened on the north side of Silver Street in 1847. The James Cunningham Carriage Factory and other businesses were built in the Canal Street area because of the advantages offered by the Erie and Genesee Valley Canals and the railroads.

About the time Anthony's family arrived at 17 Madison Street, the City Hospital was located on West Main Street. The burials in the old pioneer cemetery were removed and the horse-drawn street car line ran all the way to Bull's Head. The Madison Hotel at 56-58 Madison, operated in later years. Nearby on West Main Street were two railroad stations, the Western New York and Pennsylvania Railroad at 340 and the Buffalo, Rochester & Pittsburgh Railway Depot at 320. The depot at 340 is now demolished, but the station at 320 is now Nick Tahoe's Restaurant.



*Susan B. Anthony with her secretary Emma B. Sweet.
(Collection of Rochester Public Library).*

A Home of Her Own

The tree just off the porch has stood for well over a century. The slate sidewalks are worn by the feet of many famous and everyday citizens who came and went from the house in Anthony's lifetime. A visitor is required by the smallness of the porch to stand where Anthony did as she looked out into her neighborhood. When the door opens you pass

through the same door as Anthony, her friends, the children who came calling for cookies, the deputy U. S. Marshal who came to arrest her and finally her pall bearers. Many of the rooms in the house are reminders of the events in Anthony's life.



The house on Madison Street had grown ivy by the mid-1960s.

The third floor study was added in the 1890's.

(Collection of Rochester Public Library).

Inside the front door, a stairway on the left leads to the second floor. To the right is the front parlor. It was here in 1872 that a reluctant deputy United States marshal came to arrest her for voting illegally along with fourteen other women, including her sisters, Mary, Hannah and Guelma. She registered to vote at the 8th precinct located in a barber shop on the site of the present McDonalds on West Main Street. After her arrest, she made numerous speeches around the county asking the public, "Is it illegal for a citizen to vote?" Judge Henry R. Selden and Judge John Van Voorhis defended Susan. But a change of venue moved her trial to Canandaigua. Forbidden to speak on her own behalf, Judge Ward Hunt directed the jury to find a verdict of guilty, then pronounced her guilty and ordered her to pay a \$100 fine. She refused to pay. Knowing that jailing her on contempt would give Anthony the opportunity to take her case to the Supreme Court, Judge Ward Hunt did not pursue her case and she never paid the fine. It was here in the front parlor, too, that her body lay in state prior to her funeral.

Through the front parlor to the back parlor and on the right is Mary Anthony's small study. Mary was a school teacher and the first female principal in the Rochester school district. She was president of the Rochester Political Equality Club and of the New York State Suffrage Association. It was her housekeeping that enabled Anthony to have a home to rest from her long travels.



*The Bloomer fashion popularized by Amelia Bloomer seems to be little different from the walking dresses of the last century.
(Collection of Anne Coon).*

Susan and her sister, Mary, were the only Anthony children to remain unmarried. But on October 9, 1902, the housekeeper and sometimes secretary, Anna Dann Mason, did marry Gilbert T. Mason in the house and Susan was the bridesmaid at the age of 82. Susan quoted Lucretia Mott when she said during the ceremony, "May your independence be equal, your dependence mutual, your obligations reciprocal."

Through the back parlor is the dining room where Susan and her sister entertained many guests and doubtless had many conversations about past and upcoming campaigns. Susan was used to many children around. Susan's sister, Guelma, lived there for a time with her husband and children and Hannah next door also had children. Daniel sent his children from Kansas to be educated in the east too. The house was always busy. Susan loved to bake and often prepared dinner in the kitchen for guests. A door from the kitchen leads to the garden and beyond is Rosebach Alley where there were a number of small businesses including a bakery, a shoemaker and a dressmaker.

There is a back stairway leading to the second floor from the dining room and a front stairway at the front entrance. To the right of the top of the front stairway is Susan's mother's bedroom which later served as a guest room. Directly at the top of the stairs is Susan's sitting room or

guest room. Directly at the top of the stairs is Susan's sitting room or study. Down the hall is the room Mary slept in and at the end of the hall, past the back stairway is the bathroom and Susan's bedroom. The feather and star pattern applique quilt on Susan's bed was sewn by Susan and Hannah for Hannah's wedding. The alligator bag Susan carried sets on a dresser. A San Francisco children's jump rope rhyme, "Miss Susie," refers to it, "Send for the doctor, send for the nurse, send for the lady with the alligator purse."

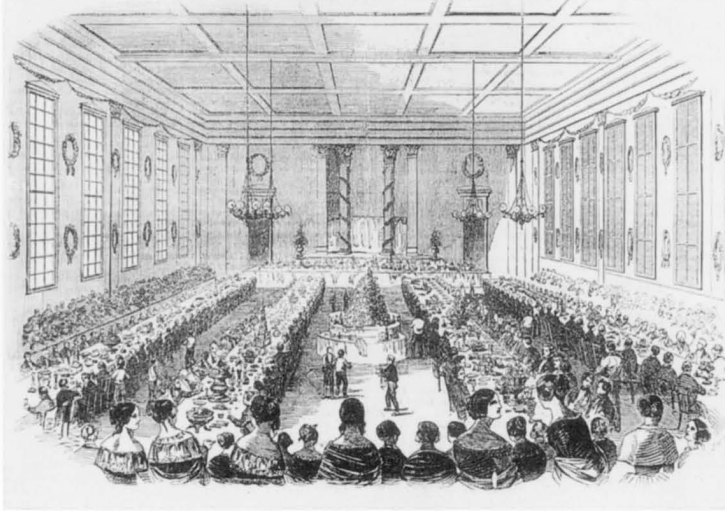


*Corinthian Hall where Susan B. Anthony, Frederick Douglass, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and other speakers were jeered from the Abolitionist meeting they held during the three day Abolitionist meeting in 1859.
(Rochester Public Library).*

The bathroom where Susan took her cold morning baths is next to her bedroom. She believed the cold baths she took every morning were invigorating. She had the radiator installed for heat. Even at eighty-two years of age, Susan had the energy of a woman twenty years younger. Every morning she and her sister had breakfast at seven. She did calisthenics and took brisk walks in the neighborhood no matter what the weather was.

The third floor was added in the 1890s as a work room for Susan who was president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association. Here she worked with Ida Husted Harper for seven years to complete the *The Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony* and possibly some of the volumes of the *History of Woman Suffrage*. The Library of Congress now has the diaries and scrapbooks that were used to complete the volumes; but

there were 20,000 letters that reportedly could not be placed with a library or university. Mary tried to burn the letters by the boxful in the fireplace, but burning papers were sent drifting from the chimney throughout the neighborhood. In the early morning so that it would not disturb Susan, Mary started a bonfire in the back yard and burned the letters.



Corinthian Hall inside.
(Collection of Rochester Public Library).

Ida Husted Harper wrote in the *History of Woman Suffrage*:

If one desire an illustration of the progress made by women during half a century, let him turn to the early chapters of this book and read the story of those first meetings where Miss Anthony, rising timidly in her seat and asking to make a remark, was literally howled down because no woman was allowed to speak in public; and then let him read these closing chapters of her ovations extending from ocean to ocean. From a canvas of New York state in a sleigh, speaking to little handfuls of people in country school houses, ridiculed by the newspapers and outlawed by society—to an endless series of conventions and congresses in all the great cities of the country, with no hall large enough to hold the audiences and with almost the unanimous approval of press and people! Only a short period of less than fifty years scarcely a second in the eons of history, and yet in that brief time revolution in public sentiment, and overturning of the customs and prejudice of the ages, the release of womanhood from unknown centuries of bondage! ¹⁷



*Home and walking dresses like these were too cumbersome for the active woman. They contrast with the Bloomer outfit on page 21.
(Collection of Anne Coon).*

‘Failure Is Impossible’

Though Anthony had once expressed some doubt in the ability of the next generation to carry on the work of the women’s rights movement, she showed them every confidence in her final speech at Baltimore. She seemed to realize that just as she received inspiration from others, the women in her audience would follow in her footsteps. After ten minutes of applause and cheers for her, she said in carefully chosen words:

I have listened to many magnificent speakers, all testifying to the righteousness, the justice and the worthiness of the cause of woman suffrage. I never saw that great woman Mary Wolstonecraft, but I have read her eloquent and unanswerable arguments in behalf of the liberty of womankind. I have known most of the women who came after her Lucretia Mott, the Grimke sisters, Lucy Stone, Anna Dickinson, Elizabeth Cady Stanton a long gallery of great women. I have heard them speak, saying in only slightly different phrases, exactly what I have heard these newer advocates of the cause say this week. Those older women have gone on. I am here for a little time only, but my place must be filled as theirs were filled. The fight must not cease; you must see that it does not. Failure is impossible.¹⁸

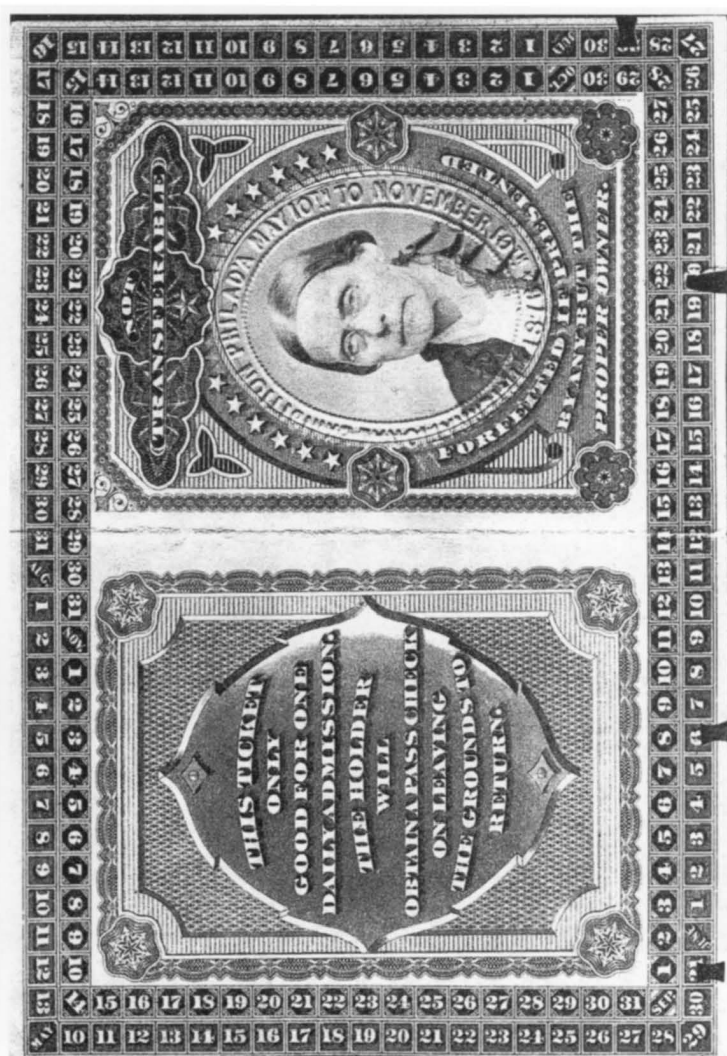
Editor's note: The Susan B. Anthony House will soon be under restoration. Hannah Anthony's home next door will become an educational and visitors center. Furnishings in the House have been little referred to while they are being researched. For their assistance in this manuscript I am indebted to Lorie Barnum, Director of the Susan B. Anthony House, Board of Trustees members Colleen Hurst and Mary Huth, researchers Elisa Herrera and Pepper Tasker and Victoria Schmidt and Leatrice Kemp of the Rochester Museum and Science Center.

Endnotes

1. Greenleaf, Jean Brooks, "Glimpses of Miss Anthony," *Rochester Democrat & Chronicle*, February 12, 1911.
2. *IBID*.
3. *IBID*.
4. *IBID*.
5. *IBID*.
6. *New York Daily Tribune*, December 14, 1877.
7. *North American*, January 26, 1902.
8. *New York Daily Tribune*, November 14, 1899.
9. *Rochester Post Express*, March 14, 1906.
10. *IBID*.
11. *IBID*.
12. *Rochester Post Express*, March 12, 1906.
13. *IBID*, March 14, 1906.
14. *Rochester Post Express*, March 14, 1906.
15. *Union & Advertiser*, November 21, 1896.
16. *Rochester Post Express*, March 15, 1906.
17. *IBID*, March 13, 1906
18. *IBID*, March 14, 1906.



Two sides of the admission ticket for the International Exhibit
in Philadelphia in 1876 shown on pages 26 and 27.
(Collection of Rochester Public Library).



*At the International Exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876 Susan B. Anthony represented her brother's newspaper, The Leavenworth Times.
(Collection of Rochester Public Library).*



Anthony celebrated her birthday early at the home of Kate Gleason so that she could attend the Baltimore National American Woman Suffrage Convention on February second. Despite a severe cold, she gave a speech when applauded at the convention. She said, "When will the men do something besides extend congratulations? I would rather have President Roosevelt say one word to Congress in favor of amending the Constitution to give women the Suffrage than to praise me endlessly!" This is perhaps the last professional photograph taken of Anthony, taken in Philadelphia enroute to the Baltimore convention in February of 1906. She died on March 13, 1906. (From the Rochester Museum & Science Center Archives).