

Alice Paul

and her Quaker witness

by Roger Burns

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About the author: Roger Burns lives in Washington, DC. Like the subject of this article, he is a street activist as well as a Friend, being active in the affairs of his neighborhood and his city. Roger has a mystical bent. Several years ago during an Experiment With Light workshop he received a strong leading to promote racial reconciliation. Since then his major focus in the realm of social witness is on race issues. He has helped to manage a weekly public discussion about race that takes place at the church-run Potter's House Cafe in Washington. He serves on the Peace and Social Justice Committee of the Bethesda Friends Meeting. Roger was for a time a history major at college, and he later earned bachelor's and master's degrees in economics.

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Published by Roger Burns, 2800 Quebec St. NW, Washington, DC 20008
United States of America
Phone: 202-966-8738
Email: rogerburns@pobox.com

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Alice Paul and her Quaker witness

by Roger Burns

The author invites and encourages feedback to him about the text of this article. Please contact him via email at rogerburns@pobox.com.

In December of 1912, a quiet 27-year-old Quaker woman arrived alone in Washington, DC. Figuratively speaking, she had in one hand a list of political contacts provided to her by the nation's pre-eminent women's rights organization. That list would soon prove to be outdated and largely useless. In her other hand she held ten dollars, the total annual budget of the national organization's "Congressional Committee," from which the organization's leadership expected very little.¹

Within the three months after this young woman arrived in Washington, the following things occurred:

- she created a public event that made headlines around the country;
- she was negotiating in person in the White House with the President of the United States about women's voting rights;
- she had laid a firm foundation for a vibrant movement that would define the rest of her life and that would change the American nation.

Her name was Alice Paul.

During the sixty-four years prior to Alice Paul's arrival in Washington, all attempts to make substantial progress in passing an amendment to the U.S. Constitution to grant nationwide voting rights for women had failed. But once Miss Paul began her own efforts and attracted people to her vision, that goal was accomplished within eight years. Before that victory could be achieved, however, Alice Paul had to risk her reputation, her sanity and her life.

As of this writing, many Friends are unaware of Alice Paul's accomplishments. But I believe that when her full story is understood, every Friend will take pride in her. She has virtually become my spiritual big sister, and because she has endeared herself to me in this way, throughout this article I often refer to her simply as "Alice."

This is not an historical paper, but rather it is a well-researched *apologia* written in support of the Quakerly life and social witness accomplishments of Alice Paul. It is a story of Spirit that is aimed at the heart. Readers will see clear examples of Alice living out each of the Friends' testimonies of integrity, equality, peace, simplicity, and community. I further claim and argue in the Commentary section later in this article that Alice Paul's actions were divinely led.

I am grateful to all who have helped to develop this article and to promote its distribution. I wish to be clear that all opinions expressed here, except where otherwise attributed, and any errors of fact are completely my own.

Her early life. Alice Paul was born in 1885 in Mt. Laurel, New Jersey. Her family had been Friends for eight generations. Respect for females was an everyday norm in her household and in her Hicksite community—she knew no other way of living during her childhood and youth, and her level of self-esteem did not lessen when as an adult she later went out into a world that did not have full respect for women. Alice was the eldest child among her siblings, and consequently from her earliest days she grew accustomed to being assigned important responsibilities by her parents. Her father used to say “If you want something hard and disagreeable done, I bank on Alice to do it.”² Alice could be sensitive about some tasks, but if she felt something needed to be done, she would follow through on what she had committed to.

Alice was very drawn to the novels of Charles Dickens. She had an instinct to help the underdog. For a time she was enthused about the nascent social work movement that was just getting underway in her day, which at its outset had the ambitious aspiration to vanquish all poverty. Social work appeared to be a good and effective way to change the world for the better. With a Swarthmore degree in hand, Alice moved to New York City to participate in the nation's center of the social work movement, based at Columbia University.

But after having practiced social work for one year, Alice came to feel that such efforts were contributing a mere drop to an overwhelming ocean of societal troubles. She came to believe that the social work movement was not capable of making serious progress in whittling down the problems of the world. She chose to continue with her graduate studies until she could discern what the best focus for her life ought to be.

When, as a young adult, she left her hometown she came to see and feel that women were, at best, second-class citizens. They had no property rights, no right to a career except in very few fields, were expected to be obedient to men, and not to even express opinions in public. Alice wished she might make a substantial contribution to society, despite that the nation she lived in was not ready to accept any leadership role from a woman. Poverty, war . . . there were so many issues. So what should be her focus, and what kind of career could she forge? That was her big question.

Alice, a voracious reader, was a very gifted person. During her student days her teachers and professors all wished she would enter academia. But teaching—and for that matter, centering her life on marriage—were not appealing to Alice. After graduating from

Swarthmore, she chose to continue on to graduate studies. But all the while that she was outwardly focusing on her studies, within her innermost self she was seriously concerned about her inability to find an ultimate path for her life that would be truly fulfilling for her.

Her future right in front of her. At the age of 22 Alice moved to Birmingham, England to do graduate work at the Woodbrooke Settlement Centre, a part of a Quaker college founded by George Cadbury. One day Alice attended a speaking event where the topic was the proposal to give British women the right to vote. One of the scheduled speakers was Christabel Pankhurst, the adult daughter of the famed Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst, the grand dame of the British “Suffragettes” movement. Christabel Pankhurst was renowned as being a charismatic speaker, the *London Daily News* declaring that “She was born to command crowds.”³

Christabel spoke impressively. But it wasn't merely her words that caught the attention of the audience: her demeanor exuded supreme confidence and poise. It was as though she had arrived by a time machine from a future era in which sexism and low self-esteem due to gender had been completely vanquished long ago. Her words did not speak about a future that might timidly be hoped for, but rather one that was near enough to be grasped. As Christabel made her case, Alice was entranced.

After the speech, Alice was among those who approached Christabel for a personal conversation. Sometimes a resonance happens between two people when they've both had very similar life experiences. What Alice could not have consciously known at this initial meeting with Christabel was how very much the two of them had in common.

They both came from upper middle class families whose politics favored social witness. They were both raised by suffragist parents—and in good part due to that, neither Alice nor Christabel knew a moment of their lives when they experienced low self-esteem due to their gender. (This also marked them both as very different from the world around them.) They both had graduate degrees, which was quite unusual for women at that time. They were both the eldest child in their respective families—thus they had grown accustomed to taking on major responsibilities at an early age. They had fathers who were very accomplished, and both of their fathers had died. They were both under 30. They were both ambitious, talented, eloquent. And they both had a deep desire to change the world.

When the unknown Alice looked upon the famous Christabel, she saw a rock star. Alice had long been indecisive as she painfully pondered how she might lead a meaningful life. In contrast, Christabel had supreme confidence about what she needed to do, and was unequivocally clear as to how to get it done. During her conversation with Christabel, the answer to Alice's innermost question seemed to be literally standing right in front of her. From that day forward, Alice Paul's soul was on fire for the cause of women's suffrage.

Deeds, not words. Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst and her late husband were widely known throughout Britain as ultra-liberal leaders. At various times Emmeline and Richard each stood for Parliament. As their suffrage movement steadily developed, Emmeline grew to international

prominence. When the Pankhurst suffrage movement began, it initially pursued lobbying efforts. But hard experience taught them that genteel tactics would not work in the rough and tumble of British politics. Elected officials would regularly give their personal word that they would support the cause. But invariably they would betray. Emmeline came to develop a practical motto that would define what must be sought: “Deeds. Not words.” Their movement would relent in its pressure tactics only *after* an official took clear, committed action.

Over time the “Suffragettes,” as they came to be called, would find that they needed to pursue increasingly militant tactics in order to achieve their goals. To get the public’s attention, they needed to appear in the newspapers. And to get into the newspapers, they needed to take provocative actions that would land themselves in jail.

Mrs. Pankhurst did not ask her followers to do things she wouldn’t do herself. She personally provoked the authorities, went to jail, went on hunger strike, and was force-fed. She was an absolutely fearless visionary. Her confidence was palpable to all who were in her presence. Her followers held her in awe.

Alice the suffragette. Alice’s inner being was fully on board with the *concept* of the suffrage movement. But for her personally, there was still a big hitch. It is one thing to read in history about heroes, distant in time, who risked their reputations, their freedom and their lives for good causes. But it would be quite another thing for Alice to actually seek to go to jail herself, for whatever cause.

Alice volunteered for the Pankhurst movement, but she began with entry-level tasks that involved virtually no risk. She became a “newsie”—that is, she sold the Suffragettes’ newspaper on street corners. Alice was dedicated and talented. She advanced rapidly. Soon she was appointed to be the coordinator of all the newsies. One day Alice received an invitation to join a protest that was to be led by Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst herself. However, the action was likely to lead to arrest. Alice was deeply intrigued, but she was greatly torn since she was trepidatious about going to jail. What would her family and her home town think? Eventually, and with great reticence, she emboldened herself and signed up.

Mrs. Pankhurst and the suffragettes proceeded to the Parliament building and demanded to see the Prime Minister. They were refused. A *mêlée* ensued with the police, and many were arrested. Including Alice.

In the months that followed, Alice was arrested many more times. In jail she participated in hunger strikes. Alice’s mother sent her a letter expressing concern that her daughter might continue in these dangerous activities, and suggested that Alice should consider coming home. But Alice was on fire. She was in the midst of a movement that she knew intuitively was destined to make historic change in the world. And she was a part of it all. She was having the time of her life. Alice put off her mother’s suggestion to return home.

It was that American girl. During several protests, Alice was among those who volunteered to be arrested. When the suffragettes were later released they were expected to speak at public

rallies, to inspire additional support for the movement. Going to jail is scary. But there is something that is much more scary than being in jail, and that is: speaking to a crowd in public. Shy Alice completed her time behind bars, but during her early days as a suffragette she went very far out of her way to evade the duty of being a public speaker.

While jailed, the suffragettes demanded to be accepted as political prisoners who are not criminals. The police refused. The suffragettes in turn went on hunger strike. The police responded with forced-feeding, which is quite a painful experience and which can be lethally dangerous. Alice and others were arrested, went on hunger strike, and were force-fed. They were later released. But a weakened Alice had to be carried out on a stretcher. Later when she wrote home to her mother and described her activities, she minimized the danger involved. She sincerely declared that she would never go on hunger strike again. Yet she did.

The suffragettes' adventures were widely reported in the British newspapers. The American press picked up the stories as well. Back in New Jersey, Alice's mother Tacie was now learning about the suffragettes' escapades not only from Alice but also from the American newspapers. She wrote to Alice again saying that she should not put herself in such great danger. Alice knew that if her mother got too concerned, she might withdraw Alice's family stipend and demand that she return home. Alice repeated her earlier reply, adding that all of the newspaper accounts were embellished, to get their readers excited, and were not to be taken seriously. And that she was not really in any danger at all.

One day Tacie read an overseas news report about suffragettes who were serving time in Britain's Holloway prison for women. The article said that every time the hunger-striking suffragettes were force-fed, one of them was in such pain that her screams could be heard from one end of the prison to the other. The British news report identified the name of that suffragette.

It was that American girl: Alice Paul.

Tacie was surely livid when she put down her newspaper and went to her writing desk, to dispatch her new letter to Alice. She included travel money, and the demand that Alice return home at once. Which Alice shortly did.

Tacie later asked her daughter why for the first time in Alice's life did she mislead her mother about her situation. Alice replied that the experience of the forced-feeding was so horrifically painful that she felt compelled to put it out of her mind. She was sharing with Tacie the mistruth she was telling herself.⁴

When her family greeted Alice upon her arrival back in the States, they were shocked to see that she was emaciated. Although her condition improved over time, her health never fully recovered. Alice once again vowed that she could never again undergo forced-feeding. But shortly thereafter, the ambivalent Alice said that she could.

Over the course of the next two and a half years, Alice was enrolled in the University of Pennsylvania where she earned her PhD. Her doctoral dissertation surveyed the status of women's legal rights.

Metamorphosis. During the time Alice served with the Suffragettes in Britain, she was an obedient, dutiful apprentice—but while she was excellent at being a follower, she herself never initiated anything. And when she first returned to the States from Britain, she was still unconfident and indecisive about what the focus of her future life should be. However, some two years later when she became seriously involved with the American suffrage campaign, she was supremely confident, clear in purpose, and completely ready to change the world.

We have no personal diary or any other explicit record to show the timeline of Alice’s spiritual evolution. But in my view, when Alice returned home and took some time to emotionally recover from the trauma of the forced-feedings in Britain, *that* was when her healing became complete, and when her inner personality at long last came together to form the leader we've come to know her as in history. As unfolding events would later reveal, the matured Alice's tenacious commitment to see her cause through to the very end was literally in her bones.

If Alice Paul had experienced only one major spiritual epiphany in her life, in all likelihood it would have been during this time, just before she entered the American suffrage campaign.

Parade, and meteoric rise. In late 1912, with her doctorate completed, Alice and a few colleagues approached the leadership of the main suffrage organization in the United States, the National American Women's Suffrage Association, most frequently referred to simply as “the National.” The National had all but completely given up on obtaining approval from a recalcitrant Congress for a nationwide law that would give the vote to all American women. The organization was instead focused on obtaining voting rights from each of the forty-eight states separately, a strategy that likely would not enfranchise most American women for many decades to come. Alice requested that she take on the National's moribund Congressional Committee which had long been going through the motions of seeking a Federal suffrage amendment. The leadership did appoint her to manage the modest amount of work that was expected from that minor committee.

To drum up public interest, Alice and company planned to put on a parade in the nation's capital. There was much pent-up interest across the United States for attempting any new approach to achieve suffrage. Financial donations and volunteers for the project poured in from every corner of the country. In addition, Alice got to team up with her old friend Lucy Burns who Alice knew from the Suffragette movement in Britain, and with Mabel Vernon, who was Alice's fellow Swarthmore classmate and was also a Friend.

Alice made a point of soliciting the support and participation of the famous young celebrity Inez Milholland, who was an attorney, a noted social reformer, and a fashionable socialite who hailed from a prominent family. The attractive, vivacious and energetic Inez very much fit the image of that era's so-called “New Woman,” who was educated and independent minded. As a lawyer she investigated abusive conditions in prisons, and for a time she would

become a war correspondent on the front lines in Europe, dispatching news articles that reflected her pacifist views.

The planned parade in Washington was cleverly scheduled for the day before the newly elected President (Woodrow Wilson) was to be inaugurated, in order to take advantage of the crowds that would have already assembled in the city for the presidential event. When President-elect Wilson arrived in town on that day by train, the vast Union Station was virtually empty. Expecting to be greeted by sizable crowds, one of his entourage asked where all the people were. It was explained that everyone had gone downtown to see the women's suffrage parade.

The Pennsylvania Avenue parade was to a large degree a grand success. Somewhere between five and eight thousand women marched in dozens of organized contingents, with many beautiful floats, and with half a million onlookers. It was, according to the *New York Times*, "one of the most impressively beautiful spectacles ever staged in this country."

At the head of the parade was the famed Inez Milholland, riding atop a horse, wearing flowing Romanesque robes, a cape and a ceremonial sword, a veritable Xena, Warrior Princess. She was the living, breathing emblem of America's New Woman who was leading the nation into its future. The motto on her banner declared: "Forward Into Light!"

Unfortunately, part way through the day's festivities the procession was disrupted by many rowdy inaugural revelers, a substantial number of whom had been imbibing earlier in the day. The local police chose not to intervene. However, the next day many newspapers greatly praised the women for having organized the magnificent parade, while admonishing the government for not having provided protection. Within two weeks, Alice and her colleagues were in the Oval Office of the White House negotiating with the President about the future of women's voting rights. The overall outcome was an admirable net plus for the suffrage movement. And Alice became immensely popular with the rank-and-file members of the National organization.

A fork in the road. Around that time, Carrie Chapman Catt became president of the National organization. She had worked in the suffrage movement for twenty-five years, and had served as a direct assistant to Susan B. Anthony. Experience had taught her that most American women would never gain the vote during her own lifetime, nor in the next generation. Catt planned to spend her entire life doing the best she could, and then pass the baton on to others. She came to resent young Alice Paul, who behaved as though miracles could be achieved quickly.

Alice's committee started its own newspaper. It urged voters to boycott President Wilson and all Democrats until they would support a Federal suffrage amendment, a strategy that was copied from the British Suffragettes. The National's leaders, particularly president Catt, were shocked. Such a policy undermined the relationships they had spent years building with the politicians who were already in power, as the National's leaders proceeded with their plodding state-by-state suffrage campaign.

The leaders decided to reformulate Alice's Congressional Committee. They asked Alice to resign from the old committee, and to apply to be the leader of the new one. She applied. But she was not appointed. Alice Paul's services were no longer required.

Catt started up a new approach to bolster the National's bogged-down state-by-state campaign. However, several state organizations approached Alice and said they strongly preferred to continue supporting Alice's campaign for a Federal amendment. Out of these discussions emerged a new, separate organization⁵, the National Woman's Party, or NWP, under the leadership of Alice Paul and Lucy Burns. The NWP would not run its own candidates for office, rather they urged voters to support candidates based on their commitment to the women's suffrage issue.

Over the next few years, the NWP as led by Alice and Lucy campaigned against the party that was in control of the Congress and the White House, the Democrats. Along the way, the National organization woke up to the fact that the NWP's campaign for a suffrage amendment was actually gaining traction in Congress. The National's president Carrie Chapman Catt then declared that she had developed a "winning plan" to gain passage for such an amendment—which had no prospect for victory until *she* came up with the strategy. Catt directed the National to proceed forward.

So now there were *two* national organizations promoting a Federal suffrage amendment. (Matthew 21:42 - "*The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.*")

The Alice experience. For the general public, Alice's demeanor, which showed a casual presumption that gender equality was normal, was rather off-putting to many people in those socially conservative times. To work directly with Alice, however, was an experience. Her colleague Inez Haynes Irwin wrote as follows:

When you ask her a question, there ensues, on her part, a moment of a stillness so profound, you can almost hear it. . . . Superficially she seems cold, austere, a little remote. But that is only because the fire of her spirit burns at such a heat that it is still and white. She has the quiet of the spinning top.⁶

Lucy Burns commented on her very first discussions with Alice about the Amendment:

When Alice Paul spoke to me about the federal work, I knew that she had an extraordinary mind, extraordinary courage and remarkable executive ability. . . . I was staggered by her speed and industry and the way she could raise money. Her great assets, I should say are her power, with a single leap of the imagination, to make plans on a national scale; and a supplementary power to see that done down to the last postage stamp."

On one issue, Alice's scruples exasperated her colleagues. Irwin quotes Maud Younger: "She believes absolutely in open diplomacy. She believes that everything should be told; our main argument with her was in regard to the necessity for secrecy in special cases."

On a number of occasions when Alice's office colleagues needed to consult with her, she was nowhere to be found. In one instance, several of them went on a hunt to find Alice. They located her locked in a private room. Setting her privacy aside, they spied through a keyhole to discover Alice sitting dead still, quiet with her eyes closed for a lengthy amount of time. Apparently she was privately practicing Quaker silence on a regular basis.⁸

Alas Inez, and the Silent Sentinels. Although Woodrow Wilson came to prominence while living in New Jersey, he was born and raised in Virginia, and he was imbued with Southern ways. He often received delegations from the NWP in his office, and no matter what he really thought of their views he would treat them with Southern politeness and cordiality. But in truth, the idea of voting rights for women did not sit well with Wilson, and he was not at all inclined to make concessions to the NWP during their many meetings with him. Nevertheless, he welcomed them to stop by again and again.

Out in the countryside, the NWP campaigned everywhere to drum up support for the Amendment. Their most popular speaker was Inez Milholland, “the woman on the horse.” The schedule of the national speaking tour was quite strenuous—for example, thirty-two cities in thirty days. However, when Inez had agreed to join the speaking tour, she had not confided to Alice about her personal secret.

While giving a speech in Los Angeles, Inez collapsed on stage. She was hospitalized. Only then was it disclosed that she had long been suffering from pernicious anemia, a condition which had no effective treatment at that time, and which is made worse by stress. On Nov. 26, 1916, at the tender age of thirty, Inez Milholland, the living symbol of the suffrage movement, died.

Shock waves rolled throughout the NWP community. After some time for bereavement, the NWP attempted to meet with President Wilson. He initially avoided them, but he eventually consented to make a strictly personal appearance at a commemorative ceremony to honor Inez. During the event, eulogy after eulogy pressed very hard about the vital cause that Inez had given her life for, and about the moral imperative that that cause must surely now be allowed to succeed. A point came where this was all too much for Wilson. He stood up and chided the three hundred suffragists who were present for trying to turn a memorial for a fallen colleague into a political negotiation about suffrage. He stormed out abruptly.

The grieving suffragists were stunned, deeply offended, and outraged by Wilson's abandonment. After some of their astonishment wore off, the personally affronted suffragists gathered themselves together that same day to strategize and to turn their collective shock into effective energy. They decided they must ratchet up their actions and get very confrontational with the callous Wilson.

Up until this moment, the suffragists had been conducting a lobbying campaign. Now, they were *at war*.

They invented a new form of protest. Starting the very next morning, the National Woman's Party began to picket the White House—a tactic that had not been used before.

Speaking no words out loud, they silently held banners and signs that promoted the suffrage cause. Often they ironically quoted Wilson's own idealistic arguments that touted democracy, thus turning his words back upon himself—publicly exposing him as a hypocrite. Wilson was the leader of the Democratic Party, which in turn controlled Congress—therefore, it was Wilson's responsibility to get the suffrage amendment approved.

The picketing suffragists called themselves the Silent Sentinels. They held watch at the front gates of the White House from sunrise to sunset, every day of the week except Sunday. For weeks. Months. For over one year. Come rain or snow or burning sun. All of their efforts got significant play in the nation's newspapers.

During this time, the United States entered World War I. The National began to publicly soft-pedal its suffrage activities for a time in order to be supportive of the war effort.⁹ Thus, during this time, the leading role for action on suffrage shifted towards Alice Paul and the NWP.

Citizens who passed by the White House started to accost the protesting suffragists for being unpatriotic by undermining support for the President during a time of war. The suffragists were attacked by unruly crowds. Those crowds also spilled out into the street, thus improperly obstructing traffic. The police decided to remove what they perceived as the source of the problem: they arrested the protesting suffragists. Most of the Sentinels were sentenced to a few days or a week, on charges of obstructing traffic. Eventually, Alice Paul herself was arrested. She was sentenced to a term of seven months.

The Night of Terror. The government was frustrated that the suffrage protests were getting a lot of coverage in the newspapers. And Alice was determined to overwhelm the jails by donating more prisoners than the jails could handle. The government began to impose longer jail sentences, and also took other steps, all designed to send a signal to discourage future protesters from joining the effort.

The new crop of arrested suffragists who arrived at the Occoquan Workhouse were intentionally brutalized in an episode that would forever after be known as the Night of Terror. All of the newly arrived suffragists were thoroughly roused. Lucy Burns was hung from the ceiling by her chained hands and she was left in that position all night. The guards approached Mrs. Dora Lewis, who was fifty-five years of age, and they purposely bashed her head against an iron bed, knocking her unconscious. She collapsed to the floor. Her cell mate Mrs. Alice Cosu saw Mrs. Lewis's seemingly lifeless body and believed she had been killed. In frightful reaction, Mrs. Cosu had a heart attack. The third cellmate, Mrs. Mary Nolan, who was seventy-seven years old, called to the guards for assistance. The guards called back and told her to shut up.⁹

Alice Paul was held separately from the other prisoners. She insisted to her jailers that she had broken no law. She demanded to be treated as a political, non-criminal prisoner. Her demand was denied. She began a hunger strike. Officials rationalized that to risk death in such a manner was surely a sign of mental instability, and therefore the public ought to be apprised

of the suffrage movement's leader's mental status. Alice was transferred to the psychopathic ward.

One psychiatrist, and then another, were brought in to carefully examine her. But they declared that Alice showed no evidence of mental disorder. One of the doctors put in his written report about Alice exactly what the government did not want to hear: "There is a spirit like Joan of Arc, and it is as useless to try to change it as to change Joan of Arc. She will die but she will never give up."¹⁰ Alice was not declared insane. She continued her hunger strike.

Much of what happened to the suffragists while they were imprisoned found its way into the newspapers. By reading these news accounts, the public became unhappy with the government. And the government became unhappy with everyone.

The crucible. Force-feeding is dangerous, in part because sometimes the tube being forced down the throat will mistakenly go into the passageway for the lungs. When that happens, the prisoner may attempt to alert the officials about the lethal error, but the tube in her mouth and throat prevent her from forming words that are intelligible. The liquid food, a mixture of cold milk and egg yolks, is poured into the lungs of the prisoner, who then drowns. The suffragists who chose to endure force-feeding were aware that they were risking death before they decided to volunteer for this protest tactic.

The few times that Alice described these forced-feeding experiences, she never went into detail. Nevertheless we do have an account of the experience of British suffragette Lady Constance Lytton:

. . . he put down my throat a tube which seemed to me much too wide and was something like four feet in length. The irritation of the tube was excessive. I choked the moment it touched my throat until it had got down. Then the food was poured in quickly; it made me sick a few seconds after it was down and the action of the sickness made my body and legs double up, but the wardresses instantly pressed back my head and the doctor leant on my knees. The horror of it was more than I can describe. I was sick over the doctor and wardresses, and it seemed a long time before they took the tube out.¹¹

There is also a description of the experience of Britain's Sylvia Pankhurst, as written by history professor June Purvis:

Sometimes, when the struggle was over, or even in the heat of it, she felt as though she was broken up into many different selves, of which one, aloof and calm, surveyed all the misery, and one, ruthless and unswerving, forced the weak, shrinking body to its ordeal. Although the word 'rape' is not used in the personal accounts of force fed victims, the instrumental invasion of the body, accompanied by overpowering physical force, great suffering and humiliation was akin to it.¹²

When the force-feeding was attempted on Alice, she would clamp her jaw tightly shut. They would then hold her nose, trying to force her to decide to breathe by opening her mouth so that they might then shove the tube in. But Alice would foil them by breathing through her clenched teeth. They would then force the tube, which was the width of a finger, up through her nostrils and thereafter down into her throat and stomach. This was done three times a day. Her bloodied sinus passages had no time to heal, but the raw, unhealed bloodied passageways would experience the forced tube each time.

Alice's body had a strong reaction to the procedure. When the food was forced down into her stomach and then the tube was removed, Alice would vomit the food back out. She would be force-fed again. She would vomit it back out. Again. And again. Alice Paul's body would not allow the food to stay down.

Hunger strikers do not take in food, but they use the toilet. If the forced food does not stay down, the hunger-strikers lose weight. The government greatly desired to break Alice's will. But they absolutely could not risk ending up with a martyr on their hands. Especially a famous one, who constantly reminded the world that she had broken no law.

Beyond being force-fed, Alice's jailers also placed her on a suicide watch. They woke her every hour throughout the night and all through the day, to have a light shone in her eyes. This was supposedly to observe and to guard against suicide. It was "for her safety." In many political cases, jailers will induce misery in a prisoner, such as by keeping them sleepless, in order to break their will and encourage them to comply with the authorities. Regardless, sleeplessness magnifies pain—such as the pain Alice was experiencing from the forced-feedings and the starvation.

The prison doctors closely monitored Alice's health. She got weaker and weaker. After three weeks of daily forced feedings, the doctors approached the warden and informed him that they could no longer keep Alice Paul alive. The warden conveyed the doctors' report to the higher officials that he answered to.

Shortly after that, Alice was visited in her jail cell by journalist David Lawrence, who was a close friend to President Wilson. Lawrence told Alice that the President might be willing to urge the House and the Senate to approve the suffrage amendment, and to also transfer Alice to comfortable surroundings. He then asked: *before* these things may happen, would Alice be willing to first give a directive to her protesters to stop picketing the White House?

Few people, if any, would be able to make sound judgments in Alice's situation, due to the pain, starvation and sleeplessness. Alice gave her response to Mr. Lawrence. She said yes. She would indeed call off the picketers. She would indeed have her colleagues stop protesting at the White House—**after** the House of Representatives approved the Amendment, and **after** the Senate approved the Amendment.

Deeds. Not words.

The President's emissary was left empty-handed. He went away with nothing more than what he had come in with. The negotiating was over. The forced-feedings continued. The screams went on. And there was no rest for the weary.

Mark 15:34 - from Jesus, upon the cross:

*And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying . . .
My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

The dam breaks. Some people at that time questioned whether journalist David Lawrence's role really had any influence in these matters. But three days after the interview, Alice Paul was released from jail. Shortly after that, all of the suffragists were also released. The charges against all of them were dropped. And then the miracle news arrived: the U.S. House of Representatives announced that in the following month it would vote on the women's suffrage amendment, on January 10, 1918.

Intense lobbying of all House members began. On the day before the vote, President Woodrow Wilson revealed to the public that he was supporting the Federal amendment that would give women the right to vote.

Anti-suffrage groups, among them being lobbyists from the well-moneyed liquor industry, fought the measure. With difficulty, the House of Representatives approved the Amendment with a bare a two-thirds majority—if a single vote had been cast the other way, the measure would have failed. The matter then went to the Senate. But the Senate would never validate the measure while it continued in the control of the Democratic Party. Another eighteen months passed before there was a new national election, and American voters turned out the Democratic-controlled Senate. The new Republican Senate approved the Amendment on June 4, 1919. The suffrage proposal was thereupon ushered on to the last segment of its journey: it then had to earn approval from three fourths (i.e. thirty-six) of the forty-eight individual states. The race was on throughout the entire country.

Nine states quickly endorsed the measure within the first month. But by early in the coming year, the steam seemed to have run out of the initial groundswell of support. By the summer of 1920, only Tennessee seemed viable to be the necessary, last state needed to push the measure to victory. The opposition in the Tennessee legislature was confident that they could block it. But at the very last moment, a pivotal young legislator—prodded by a pro-suffrage letter he received from his mother—defected from the opposition and voted “Aye” in favor of suffrage.

That tipped the balance. Tennessee, the last state, approved. The national campaign had been won. The Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution became law on August 18, 1920.

The NWP celebrated the victory. From the second story balcony of their Cameron House headquarters in Washington, Alice Paul unfurled a long banner that contained thirty-six stars, one for each of the ratifying states—an act that was captured on newsreel for all posterity to see.¹³

Outcomes. Alice Paul had many adventures later in her life, including co-authoring and promoting the Equal Rights Amendment. But she never again went through anything like her time in the suffrage movement. Feminist leader and author Zoë Nicholson has summarized Alice's later years as follows: "Any complete biography of Miss Paul ought to include her work in Geneva, founding the World Woman's Party, her resistance efforts during World War II, the maddening journey with the E.R.A., her closing years with her greedy nephew who sold her archives and kept the money, and her rescue from a substandard senior home by a Jewish family whom she hosted thirty years before."¹⁴ Alice died at the age of 92 in 1977, in her hometown of Moorestown, New Jersey.

Lucy Burns gave all she had to give for the suffrage movement. She returned to her native Brooklyn to raise the daughter of her late sister. Mabel Vernon, Alice's Swarthmore classmate, fellow Friend, and dedicated associate, had been among the first suffragists to be jailed. In her later years she promoted international peace and the E.R.A. Mabel died in 1975, survived by her long-time companion Consuelo Reyes.

During the course of the suffrage campaign, over five hundred women were arrested. One hundred and sixty eight of the Silent Sentinels served time as prisoners. Many people assume that all of the suffragists were young, unmarried women, but forty percent of the jailed Silent Sentinels were married.

Mary Nolan was born in 1840 in Jacksonville, Florida. She was eight years old when the Seneca Falls convention took place. She was twenty-one when the Civil War broke out. A retired school teacher, she was seventy-seven when she joined the Silent Sentinels, with whom she was arrested, many times. At one hearing, a judge offered to excuse her due to her age. But she told the court:

Your honor, I have a nephew fighting for democracy in France. He is offering his life for his country. I should be ashamed if I did not join these brave women in their fight for democracy in America. I should be proud of the honor to die in prison for the liberty of American women.

Nolan was arrested ten times, jailed five times. In November of 1920, along with millions of other women, eighty-year-old Mary Nolan voted.¹⁰

The women who risked their freedom for this cause came in all stripes and from all parts of the country. Their experience of having a direct hand in changing history affected them for the rest of their lives.

The renowned African American leader Mary Church Terrell was proud of the work she had done for the suffrage campaign. But just as she had predicted, many of the black women whose interests she had tried to advance were barred from voting due to their race, despite what the women's suffrage Amendment said on paper.

The African American sorority Delta Sigma Theta, newly created in early 1913, was only a few weeks old when it contributed a contingent to march at the back of the great suffrage parade in Washington. One hundred years later, it was the Deltas who went to Washington to organize the commemorative re-enactment of that march—now ten thousand strong—as an homage to the original historic event. And this time, after all of the many Deltas strode forward in celebration, it was the white supporters and all other non-Deltas who had the honor of marching at the end of *that* parade (and among them, the proud writer of this article). As the scriptures say: “So the last shall be first, and the first last.” (Matthew 20:16)

Carrie Chapman Catt, despite her one-sided row with Alice Paul, was one of the most prolific and accomplished feminist leaders of the 20th century. She had founded and led the International Alliance of Women, and later went on to create the League of Women Voters. And those organizations exist and are active to this day.

British women were given partial suffrage in 1918. Ten years later, as Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst approached her last days, the British government took up one remaining reform for women's suffrage. Within a few days of Pankhurst's death, Parliament enacted a new law that removed the last barriers for all British women to be able to exercise the right to vote.

Alice Paul's family home in Moorestown, New Jersey is now host to the Alice Paul Institute which conducts a leadership development program for girls and women. Alice's last office headquarters in Washington, DC, the Belmont-Paul House, has recently been designated a national monument and is managed by the U.S. National Park Service, all visitors being welcome to enter and see where Alice Paul lived and worked.

COMMENTARY

In this section I comment on several issues that are better discussed as separate topics. I argue for Alice Paul's Quakerliness, and how her life may be viewed from the perspective of five widely accepted testimonies. Lastly, I express the wish that the history and meaning of Alice Paul's life and work might be a frequent topic for educational programs at Friends' meetings.

Historical issues

Time for a reconsideration. During most of the 20th Century, the most commonly used historical resource about the last years of the suffrage struggle was the account written by Carrie Chapman Catt, who resented Alice Paul's role in what unfolded, thus essentially writing Miss Paul out of history. As for Alice, she was too modest to contest that account, and she was always focused on her current social witness project—there was no time for egotistic quibbling. But starting in the late 1980s, historians acquired a new appreciation of Alice's true role. Also, in recent times the American public has been giving more respect to social reformers in general after we had witnessed the sacrifices of the Civil Rights Movement activists of the 1950s and 1960s. And so in our day, the public is now more open to the value of stories like that of Alice Paul.

Originality and ingenuity. A few people say that Alice must have learned her strategies from her contemporary Mahatma Gandhi. In truth, Alice's tutoring came from the Pankhursts and their suffragette colleagues—who themselves took many actions that Gandhi eventually would, but the Suffragettes did each of these actions *before* Gandhi did them. The Mahatma was himself still a novice at this early point in his career. If anything, Gandhi was in part a vicarious student of the Suffragettes, and he publicly praised them for their example.

The Suffragettes formed their own organization in 1903, whereas Gandhi founded his Satyagraha movement later, in 1906. The Suffragettes started going to jail in 1905; Gandhi's followers began doing so in 1907. Alice and the other suffragettes began hunger-striking in jail in 1909. Gandhi undertook his own first “fast until death” in 1918. Even then, Gandhi's early fasts were not a protest against the government, but rather were aimed at disciplining his own followers to keep them committed to nonviolence and racial equality. Gandhi did not use fasting as political leverage against the British government until 1932.

Finally, the Suffragettes began undergoing forced-feedings in 1909. In his entire life, Gandhi never experienced forced-feeding. The British did not dare to put at risk the life of a man who had become such a globally prominent leader.¹⁵

The thinking habits that we have inherited from our culture have a great deal of momentum, to the extent that even the best of us might sometimes say, when we see true genius in a woman, that "it must have come from somewhere else." Women have infinite capabilities that we don't always acknowledge.

Using the language of the streets: when it came to the Suffragettes, those sisters got it done by themselves.

Alice took what she learned from the Suffragettes, re-worked it to fit her Quaker values, and applied her own personal genius to the American political landscape, constantly thinking of new ways to keep the press engaged in the suffrage story until the American people were eventually brought around. I claim that Alice Paul was a strategic thinker and leader of such substantial talents and accomplishments that she should rank alongside Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King.

In fairness, it is doubtful that Alice's NWP could have single-handedly won suffrage all on its own without the immense efforts of the National's broad coalition of state suffrage organizations, as led by Carrie Chapman Catt. And yet, Catt would clearly not have had the inspiration to pursue a Federal amendment at all if Alice had not blazed the path first, as attested to in Prof. Robert Fowler's biography of Catt.

Racial issues. Alice had noticed that throughout history, leaders of the women's suffrage movement would on many occasions defer to other important social issues that would arise, be it the abolition of slavery or the support of a national war effort. These pauses frequently interrupted the progress of the women's rights movement substantially. Alice was determined to not accommodate any distractions, in order to maximally ensure the success of her effort at achieving suffrage for women.

This firm commitment to a single-issue policy made her open to charges of ignoring the injustices suffered by minority groups and labor groups. Such concerns were bolstered by the sad fact that a great many prominent white leaders of the women's suffrage movement came to use race as a divisive wedge to garner support for their cause.¹⁶ When many white leaders had threatened to abandon the 1913 parade if black women were integrated into the procession's state contingents, as Alice had originally planned, it was with great difficulty that Alice engineered a compromise that was workable, albeit not agreeable to all.

African American women were ultimately asked to agree to march in contingents at the very end of the parade, which almost all of them did agree to.¹⁶ Ida B. Wells did not accept that agreement. Wells was a journalist/activist, born into slavery, who was widely known for creating a nationwide campaign against lynching. For a time she owned her own newspaper, until its offices were destroyed by a white mob. She founded a suffrage club for the black women of Chicago.

Wells insisted that in the Washington parade she must march within her Illinois state contingent, or else not at all. This was challenging for Alice, but Alice's best judgment was that there could not be an exception to the overall compromise. When the parade was actually

underway, Wells and a supportive friend slipped in among the Illinois marchers, and they all strode forward together. No one made a fuss about it, and there was no notable consequence.

If the controversy about the race issue had unraveled at that early moment, and the plans for the parade had foundered, Alice might have had no movement at all to lead to later victory. And then no women would gain the vote, neither black nor white. There were similar criticisms when Alice went on to promote the Equal Rights Amendment.

Frederick Douglass faced a similar challenge when white leaders of the women's suffrage movement asked that the proposal for a Fifteenth Amendment be augmented to include suffrage for all women as well as for black men. Douglass and his associates wisely saw that to accept such an expansion would scuttle the entire proposal, because there was so much political resistance to women's suffrage at that time. Douglass and company's unyielding stance provoked intense pushback from white feminists.

From the perspective of race and gender, the situations faced by Douglass and Paul were virtually mirror images of one another. The truth is that, as a general matter, the larger society within which we live is unable to address the reform of several of its many major sins simultaneously. Wrong as it may be, society is only able to consider accepting one major reform at a time.

Many are tempted to shoot the messenger in these situations. The messengers here are Frederick Douglass and Alice Paul. And the message is that the process of legislating, by its very nature, serves as a bottleneck for controversial reforms when more than one issue is vying for attention at the same time. This is a separate issue from the concept of building broad movements aimed at increasing human rights for all. What Douglass and Paul were trying to do about constitutional amendments was only about legislating. The failure, or the perceived failure, of Frederick Douglass and Alice Paul was their inability to wave a magic wand and make more than one major injustice quickly vanish all in the same instant.

In addition, socially conscious people these days are becoming increasingly aware of the multiple burdens borne by those who experience more than one form of unfair discrimination at the same time. Myriad prejudices exist that are prompted by race, gender, religion, ethnicity, sexual preference, sexual identity, physical or mental disability, obesity . . . the list goes on. Those who suffer from more than one form of discrimination simultaneously are therefore at the overlapping intersections of society. Full justice for such people will arrive after several separate reforms have been enacted. They can hardly imagine a future day when they might experience the kind of fair and unfettered access to equality and justice, and love, that we all say we believe in.

During the suffrage era, some black women were told by African American organizations that they should press women's groups to accommodate the needs of black women, while the women's groups in turn sent the black women back to the black organizations. No part of the women's suffrage movement was a haven from these concurrent injustices, except for groups of African American women who were gathered together in their own suffrage clubs.

In any case, if a white Friend today is confronted by someone who has experienced injustice, and who claims that Alice Paul made decisions based on bigotry, please hold such a challenge within its necessary larger perspective. The personal honor of Alice Paul, or even of Quakerism overall, is not nearly as important as the humanity of the person who is standing in front of you. In such a situation, we must engage the issues of race and justice humanely, and with as much truth and humility as possible. In such a moment it may be best to put aside the topic of Alice Paul, and then engage directly with today's issues of race, and justice. We must hear and consider every voice.

These issues deserve more discussion than space will allow here. Other articles, and entire books, have been written about the conflicts that arise between race and gender and social reform.

Complications. It is difficult to write a biography about Alice Paul without it seeming like a fawning hagiography. Some people find it difficult to believe the degree to which Alice Paul appeared to be the right person, with the right skills and the right experience, who found herself at the right place, and at the right time.

Doubters might ask, how could the young and inexperienced Alice and her partner Lucy Burns have had the skills to organize a very successful, nationally famous parade in Washington, DC? A deeper look into their backgrounds reveals that both Alice and Lucy had previously helped organize a similar parade in a major city, under the supervision of Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst, four years earlier in Edinburgh, Scotland, a city that was the same size as Washington at that time.

In that same vein, young Alice surely could not have created an effective national organization, and run the office to manage it. But Alice had been a close and intimate observer of how the Pankhursts had organized their national movement. And she had previously been the office manager of a settlement house in New York City earlier when she was pursuing graduate studies in social work.

Alice Paul, the daughter of a farmer in rural New Jersey, surely could not have had the political skills needed to successfully maneuver politicians. But she'd had her fingers directly on the pulse of the public when she received intense feedback, both positive and negative, when she engaged people face to face on innumerable occasions while she was selling the Suffragette newspaper on British street corners. And again when she conducted open-air meetings on the streets of Philadelphia for the National. And later when she did those same tasks around the nation for her own suffrage campaign. When you have thoroughly mastered an understanding of the public because you have directly engaged with them by on-the-street campaigning, you thereby also know how to manage the public's putative servants, their elected politicians—because you have come to know their boss, the people, so very well.

In her public persona Alice was admittedly a bit of a Johnny-one-note, with her rigid focus on her sole goal of seeking legal rights for women. She was criticized for having an autocratic management style—she followed her own vision and nothing else. She occasionally

needed to remind her critics that she worked only with those who felt inspired to volunteer to work with *her*, she was not forcing anyone.

Later in life when she was involved in other projects, she did not work well on an equal footing when part of a team with other leaders who were themselves also substantially accomplished in their own right. Perhaps this was a part of the aging process of any great leader. But in that team environment, when Alice Paul was not the primary leader, she was a fish out of water.

Alice Paul, the Quaker

Quakerliness. The writer Margaret Hope Bacon, who was not wholly uncritical of Alice Paul, included the following in her biographical sketch of Alice: She had a “strong sense of self-identity as a Friend all of her life”¹⁸; “[Alice] often credited her Quaker background for her long and determined struggle for women's rights . . .”¹⁹ “[Alice] had a major influence on later generations of Quaker women.” In June of 1910 when Alice was an invited speaker at a Friends' symposium she called for the creation of an American version of the Woodbrooke Quaker study center in Britain, where Alice had studied. Bacon says that an American Woodbrooke was indeed founded at a later time, and Friends named it Pendle Hill.¹⁸

When at Swarthmore, Alice had excelled at Biblical studies, and she frequently quoted from the Bible in her speeches and in her movement's political banners. While she was proud when she occasionally declared in public that she was a Quaker, beyond such a brief statement she was private about the nature of her individual concept of religion and her spiritual leanings, just as she was very private about many other personal matters. When I think about spirituality and privacy, I am reminded of a verse from the Sermon on the Mount: “*But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.*” (Matthew 6:6 NKJV)

In Alice's heyday many Friends were upset that she so militantly sought to land herself in jail, and that she also immodestly sought get herself into the newspapers—in effect dragging the reputation of Quakerism along with her. Surely this is not the Quaker way, they would say, and it is not how any of us want Quakerism or Quakers to be seen.

I will nevertheless ask all of us to consider a different view. Does speaking and acting stridently to promote the truth fall completely outside of our Quaker heritage? Were such actions wholly unknown to the earliest Friends? Did no Friend ever interrupt other people's business-as-usual in order to bring to mind a deeper, more relevant truth? Dare I ask, was not George Fox more disruptive to the status quo in his day than Alice Paul later was in hers?

President Wilson testified to the public that the American community did not need to extend legal equality to the female gender. Alice Paul's life's work was, in essence, to respond by testifying that that contention was wrong.

I ask us to go back even farther. Wasn't there once a man who overturned the tables of the moneychangers, and who set free sacrificial animals owned by law-abiding merchants? Thereby destroying private property, and disrupting the livelihood of others? These are actions that Alice Paul never did.

George Fox became well known. Jesus became well known. And Alice Paul strove mightily to promote her campaign for fairness and justice, and accidentally along the way those efforts sometimes made Alice Paul become well known. She avoided giving interviews all of her life, and she never attempted to publish a book to explain herself, which she could easily have done. Alice Paul promoted justice—not her self.

In the years preceding the Civil War, a number of Friends who were active as abolitionists were disowned by their meetings because their social witness efforts regarding slavery were deemed too disruptive to the public and social order. A century and a half later, we now look back upon those Friends as being our heroes. Similarly, the suffrage leader Alice Paul was not appreciated as a Friend in her day. I say that surely the time has come for us to see her true value. Miss Paul's life and work is a paramount example of the Quaker values and practices described in Steve Chase's essay "Revelation and Revolution: Answering the Call to Radical Faithfulness" which was published in February of 2015 as Pendle Hill Pamphlet no. 431.

Friends' monthly meetings on occasion will "release" a Friend to do special work that may involve activity outside of that meeting. The released Friend's work is thereafter given active support by that meeting. When people look at Alice's life's work, many assume that she was able to stride through Hell to achieve her ends solely because she must have been possessed by a will of steel. But when I think of all that Alice went through, that she endured intense pain and was willing to surrender her very life in order to improve the welfare of others, that she sought no earthly honors, and that the practice of Quaker silence was apparently a regular part of her life, I know for my own personal certainty that Alice Paul was released to do her work in this world at the behest of the Holy Spirit. She was implementing the second half of the Great Commandment: love thy neighbor as thyself (Mark 12:31). (I'll note that that verse from the Bible was at the core of a speech she gave at Haverford College in 1910.)

When I seek guidance on how to assess Alice, I look to what we have been given in the Sermon on the Mount: "by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:20). I say that Alice is not so much like most people we meet today, rather she is more like George Fox and Jesus himself. I therefore ask that she be judged accordingly. It was consistent with Alice's Hicksite upbringing that she did not necessarily preach with her mouth but rather that she let her life speak. As John Woolman said, conduct is more convincing than language.

Alice chose to focus her adult years on social witness. She put virtually all of her personal life aside to devote herself to that end. She remained unmarried throughout her life and had no publicly discernable love life at all. She never offered her sparse lifestyle as a role model for others, and she was never viewed as a role model by the public—although it would be well for her to be studied by those of us today who choose to pursue social witness. She

never advocated that all women ought to become protesters who should seek to go to jail for worthy causes. She focused on the one task that was in front of her—getting American law changed so that women will be treated equally. That was her assignment.

Alice was not alone within the world of Friends while she pursued her goals. During her suffrage campaign she was joined by other Friends including Mabel Vernon, Mrs. Rebecca Winsor Evans of Ardmore, Pennsylvania and her two sisters Mary and Ellen Winsor, Mrs. Amelia Himes Walker of Baltimore²⁰, Mrs. Florence Kelley of Philadelphia and Chicago, Martha Moore of Philadelphia, and Florence Sanville of Bloomfield, New Jersey and Philadelphia.²¹

The Testimonies. Alice always possessed a number of virtues, but I will now point out that from the time of her metamorphosis that occurred between her arrival home from her sojourn in Britain, and her launching of her American campaign, she thereafter fully embodied each of five widely accepted Friends' testimonies of equality, peace, simplicity, community, and most obviously of all, integrity—as seen plainly throughout her life story.

Alice was uncomfortable being in the limelight. She usually sought out others to be the public spokesperson for the movement she inspired, whether it be Lucy Burns, Mabel Vernon, Inez Milholland, or others. As mentioned, Alice was notorious for avoiding interviews, wanting to not draw attention to herself except when there might be a professional, strategic need for her to do so in order to advance the campaign for women's equality.

She never acquiesced to society's standard expectation that females should defer to male superiority. She did not lash out when she was removed from the National organization's Congressional Committee, even though that was the center of her life's work at that time. This virtue of modesty, which Alice exemplified, is considered to be one aspect of the Quaker testimony of simplicity. Alice lived quite simply, having no ostentatious possessions. She virtually lived in her office. She spent nearly every waking moment focused on the campaign she was currently involved in.

Alice was deeply indebted to the Pankhursts for giving purpose to her life, and for giving her the skills she needed to achieve her goals. She remained loyal to them in a personal way for the rest of her days. But in 1912 two different events happened: Alice launched her own suffrage campaign in the United States that operated in complete consistence with all Quaker testimonies; and at the same time, the Pankhurst movement over in Britain ramped up its militancy and took a turn towards vandalism.

Despite the ethics of Alice's own movement which always respected private property at all times, in some quarters here in America, Alice was scorned due to her past close association with the Pankhursts who were becoming increasingly notorious, years after Alice had departed from their movement. Alice had a virtually filial relationship with Emmeline Pankhurst and would never condemn her. In some quarters, the false impression that Alice was associated with the later excesses of the Pankhurst movement lived on for years after American suffrage had been won.

By working so relentlessly for the equality of women, and by doing so by first pursuing the peaceful tactic of educating all citizens about the condition of women, Alice was surely helping to lower the barriers between the genders, which would create more righteous relationships within a fairer and more just national community for us all. Granted that the Friends' testimony of community usually refers to the spiritual community of Friends, Alice was called upon to reform the larger, national community within which she lived. She did so by exercising the process of democratic legislating, a peaceful means of achieving one's ends.

Alice's entire life was about being a living example of her Quaker values, going well beyond holding opinions about them. She was willing to suffer torture and death rather than give up those values. There are few examples of people who have such a deep level of integrity.

In sum, the paragraphs above have argued the case that Alice Paul embodied each one of the five widely accepted Friends' testimonies of integrity, equality, peace, simplicity, and community.

Summary characterization. Alice Paul wrought a wonder one hundred years ago by approaching a nation that could not imagine consenting to give women the right to vote, and convincing that nation to embrace exactly that. We all believe now that women ought to have that right. That has become a part of our national being. I say the time has come to acknowledge Alice Paul's immense accomplishment, which was peaceably won via conviction.

Alice Paul was as single-minded as George Washington, as courageous and as determined as Mary Dyer, and overall was as peaceful and as peaceable as Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and Jesus himself. After I learned the story of Alice Paul, the Friend who in my view became the embodiment of all Quaker testimonies, and a Friend who risked her life for the welfare of others, it has never occurred to me to wonder whether Alice is worthy of approval from today's world of Friends. But what I do sometimes wonder is: are *we* (including myself) worthy of *her*?

Requests. I wish that Friends' meetings everywhere might regularly commemorate Alice Paul each year through educational events. To this end, we might keep in mind that her birthday falls on January 11. In addition, this article is being published just prior to the centennial year of her efforts that culminated in the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920, which will be celebrated by a great many non-Friends who are aware of what Alice did. As the year 2020 approaches, we should consider making our own contributions to such centennial celebrations. Friends might want to coordinate their own actions with the 2020 Women's Vote Centennial Initiative, which has a presence on the Internet.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Claims of fact in the article above that are not cited in one of the endnotes further below can be found in one or more of the four widely recognized resources that are listed here:

Christine Lunardini, *Alice Paul: Equality for Women*. (Westview Press, 2013.) A widely acknowledged biography written by an academic historian.

Mary Walton, *A Woman's Crusade: Alice Paul and the Battle for the Ballot*. (Palgrave MacMillan, 2010.) Another excellent introduction.

Inez Haynes Irwin, *The Story of Alice Paul and the National Women's Party*. (Dellinger's Publishers, Ltd., 1977.) Originally published in 1921, this contains excellent stories from people who worked directly with Alice Paul.

Note the misspelling of "National Woman's Party" in the title above, as it was printed in that edition. Also, some editions of this book show the title as *The Story of the National Woman's Party*. And in some editions the author's name is given as Inez Haynes Gilmore.

J.D. Zahniser & Amelia Fry, *Alice Paul: Claiming Power*. (Oxford University Press, 2014.)

Some questionable judgments, but there are many facts here not easily found elsewhere.

The following are also useful resources:

Christine Lunardini, *From Equal Suffrage to Equal Rights: Alice Paul and the National Woman's Party, 1910-1928*. (toExcel Press, 1986.) This is a broader study than her 2013 biography, but not as updated as that later work.

Doris Stevens, *Jailed for Freedom*. (IndyPublish.com, undated but Amazon.com says it was published in 2003; text originally published in 1920.) Stevens was one of Alice Paul's top lieutenants and was among those who served time in jail for the cause. This account was written shortly after the suffrage movement completed its work.

It may be difficult to obtain a good copy of this old book. Some editions have overly tiny print. Others have deleted some of the original chapters. I prefer the edition cited above.

Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, *African American Women in the Struggle for the Vote, 1850–1920*. (Indiana University Press, 1998.) A good study on race and intersectionality in the suffrage movement.

Katherine H. Adams and Michael L. Keene, *Alice Paul and the American Suffrage Campaign*. (University of Illinois Press, 2008.) A good study of Alice's methods.

ENDNOTES

Some of the sources cited here refer to the books listed above in the "Suggested Readings" section.

1. Phrasing borrowed from Adams and Keene, p. 1.
2. Jean H. Baker, *Sisters: The Lives of America's Feminists*. (Hill and Wang, 2005), p.191
3. June Purvis, *Christabel Pankhurst: A Biography*. (Routledge, 2018), p. 158.
4. Tacie Paul, undated letter, Alice Paul Papers, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University. Walton, pp. 31,34-35.
5. Amelia R. Fry and Alice Paul, *Conversations with Alice Paul*, (Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley, 1976), pp. 106-112.
6. Irwin, pp. 14-15.
7. Irwin, p. 16.
8. Lucy Beard (Executive Director, Alice Paul Institute) in discussions with the author, Sept. and Oct. 2018. Beard was told of this by the noted historian Amelia Fry, who in turn gathered this directly from Alice Paul's colleagues at the National Woman's Party.
9. Leni Bessette and Louise Stanton Warren, "FROM OUR PAST: Jacksonville woman went to jail to help women get right to vote," *The Florida Times-Union*, March 12, 2005.
10. Irwin, p. 294.
11. June Purvis, "The prison experiences of the suffragettes in Edwardian Britain". *Women's History Review* 4, no. 1 (1995):120.
12. Ibid., p. 122-123.
13. PBS, *One Woman, One Vote*, DVD. Narration by Susan Sarandon, produced by Ruth Pollak. This is a part of the PBS American Experience series. (PBS, 2006.) There are two newsreel clips near the very end that show Alice Paul unfurling the victory banner.
14. Zoë Nicholson in an email to the author dated June 30, 2018.
15. The dates for the achievements of the Suffragettes were taken from June Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography* (Routledge, 2002). The dates for the achievements of Gandhi's movement were taken from Yogesh Chadha, *Gandhi: A Life* (John Wiley & Sons, 1997).
16. Barbara Hilkert Andolson, *Daughters of Jefferson, Daughters of Bootblacks: Racism and American Feminism* (Mercer University Press, 1986). Also see Terborg-Penn.
17. Lunardini (2013), pp. 51-53. Paula J. Giddings, *Ida: A Sword Among Lions* (Amistad, 2008), pp. 514-518. Terborg-Penn, pp. 121-123,130. Walton, pp. 63-64, 77.
18. Margaret Hope Bacon, *Mothers of Feminism* (Harper & Row, 1986), p. 193.
19. Bacon, pp. 1-2.
20. Stevens, Appendix 4.
21. Bacon, p. 198.