

The Object: Voting Machine

[1] Title: Description of the Machine

Annotation:

Larry Bird: The [00:02:24] particular machine that we have in the collection basically takes the form of an Australian or what would we could call a blanket ballot and simply renders [00:02:34] that in steel so you have a table of electors or elected officials and they're organized in rows by party or columns by party. [00:02:48] There're also places with little sliding little slots that you can actually write in a candidate and what is interesting about this machine is it's the first [00:02:57] to combine the movement of closing a curtain that actually hits a lever that unlocks the machine and prepares it to be manipulated for voting and while the curtain [00:03:11] is closed, you then move the levers that you— for the candidates that you wish to select or the referenda that you choose [00:03:22] and then when you open the curtain, the levers were turned to the neutral position and the counters are moved ahead one for each of the offices [00:03:34] that you selected, so it combines the features of a closeted kind of curtained voting booth which were also used when people went in to mark ballots [00:03:45] with crayons or pencils or pens with a curtain, with the actual business of a machine, so this machine that we'll be looking [00:03:57] at is really the first to combine all of those elements and all of those elements would've been familiar with anybody that still votes on that [00:04:06] kind of a machine today.

[2] Title: McKinley Blanket Ballot

Annotation:

See Figure 1: MckinleyBlanketBallotNMAH.jpg

[3] Title: Simulated Voting

Annotation:

Larry Bird: It's the same three steps to vote—you close the curtain, simultaneously unlock the levers, move the levers and [00:04:16] when you're satisfied with that, then you open the curtain, the third step, and then you're done and at the end of voting, the backs of the machines are opened [00:04:27] and the counters are visible and they're manually recorded, physically tallied up and then the machine is sealed and not reset until the next election, [00:04:38] so the machines are pretty much left inviolable until then.

Larry Bird: Well, [00:28:57] you could discuss the operating features. Maybe that's what we should do. This is a model. When you went in to vote in an election district, [00:29:10] if you were going to vote on a machine . . . [chit-chat] . . . so what we have here are two demonstration models. This is a salesman's sample that shows how the [00:29:39] innards of the machine actually work and this is a demonstration model that was used to acquaint voters who were voting in a 1944 election in which Franklin Roosevelt [00:29:52] was running against Thomas Dewey and this is not the actual machine. This is a facsimile or what we would call a replica that simply [00:30:01] is used to acquaint voters with the operating features of the actual

machine, so the red lever here, the curtain is open. The red lever closes [00:30:16] the curtain and this frees the levers to be voted, so in this case, you're voting for a referendum issue.

Here's another one you're voting for. Then [00:30:33] you move down to the Democratic Party line, the Republican Party line, and the Socialist Party line in which you would vote for Roosevelt or [00:30:41] no, I've changed my mind, I think I want to vote for Thomas Dewey. Well, you can't over-vote. You have to release the Roosevelt lever [00:30:49] and then you can vote for this down here, and so on across the board for each individual candidate and office. Now, if you wanted to vote the entire [00:31:05] Democratic Party line, you could do that with this lever but first you're going to have to release the Republican levers and then you've got it and [00:31:21] none of these can be. Whoops. Well, we need some work on this machine. [noise] Let's just back up. Okay.

And when you're done voting, you [00:31:39] open the curtain, the levers return to the neutral position, the curtain's now open, and it's ready for another voter and at the end of the voting, end of [00:31:46] the day's voting, the machine would be opened in the back, the full-size machine, and the numbers would be tallied and recorded by hand and this is a salesman's sample [00:32:02] from the— I think it's from the '60s. It shows you the face of what the voter would see. This would— This device functions as the curtain which [00:32:17] you then close. You see how those cams were locked into place and let's vote for this guy here and as I push this lever down, you can see [00:32:30] that cam is going to engage the wheel. See how that popped into place.

The curtain's open. We're [00:50:39] going to close to curtain. Let's show with the curtain's open, none of the levers can be voted. The machine is locked when the [00:50:46] curtain's open. When the curtain is closed, all the levers are freed up to vote. If you wanted to vote the entire Democratic [00:50:55] Party line, you push this down and then you could not vote on any of the other levers. They're all locked, even the ones on the party individuals [00:51:05] are locked. You can't vote any other entity. If you want to change your mind and vote the whole Socialist Party ticket, you would have to [00:51:11] release the Democratic lever. Then you could vote the whole Socialist Party ticket and the same would be true. Things are locked [00:51:21] for the Republican Party ticket and then [00:51:31] you can't vote for Democrats. You can only vote.

And if you wished to split your ticket, split your ballot, you vote for Roosevelt. Excuse me. Let's vote for Roosevelt. Why is that like that? Okay. You can't vote— This [00:51:49] is where I'm having trouble. Let's vote for Roosevelt. There. Oh, it's a little more forceful action. You cannot vote for Dewey without [00:52:04] un-voting for Roosevelt and then you can freely select and split. If you wanted to vote for him, you have to un-vote for him and so forth [00:52:20] down the line, so you've got a pretty mixed up split ticket here. Let's vote for a couple of referenda issues here and then when you're done, you're [00:52:32] satisfied, the levers are returned to the neutral position when you open the curtain and the votes have been recorded. Then [00:52:49] the next person enters the booth and begins again.

[4] Title: Mechanical Flaws

Annotation:

Larry Bird: The only flaw in this process is sometimes the— They consistently [00:04:49] check. People who over time recorded these votes, they had to check for vote tallies ending in 999 which were always suspect because that meant typically [00:05:02] that the trip was not rolling over from 999 to 000 so that's one of the flaws and the other was, of course, the large size of the machine and the complexity [00:05:19] in servicing such a thing and then moving it and storing it, but in its day, those machines were really the symbols of kind of a progressive [00:05:30] reform. It could— A single machine as expensive as that might be, could service an entire election district, precincts and more, and so this [00:05:44] contributed to precincts being enlarged, lines being redrawn to fit any number of machines that previously you would only be able to service by a hand [00:05:53] count, a hand tally of physical paper ballots, so there were advantages to them with, of course, with the expense, but this was pretty much the [00:06:04] forward-looking thinking local government, the election district, the supervisor of elections, people who administer, administrative election look [00:06:17] to the machine as a symbol of this modern progressive reform.

[5] Title: Patents and Weight of the Machine

Annotation:

Larry Bird: Okay. The larger [00:00:39] machine has a range of patents that are actually painted onto the side of it from throughout the 1890s. [00:00:49] I think the earliest is 1890. The last is 1899 and these machines were continuously in development from the late 1880s up through the [00:01:01] 1960s really and one of the first machines was actually developed by a man whose profession was making— Well, he was a locksmith basically but actually he made [00:01:14] the tumblers for safe combinations and he was very much attuned to the political world and the times and with the problems with elections, particular [00:01:26] in New York City in the 1880s and the dominant metaphor then was the political machine, meaning the Tammany Ring of Boss Tweed and so how do you fight [00:01:42] corruption in politics, how do you fight a political machine. Well, the answer was you make a voting machine and so they began to experiment with these kinds [00:01:52] of— what eventually turned out to be a— it's described as a gear and lever voting machine and it had a couple of sort of remarkable [00:02:00] features, the first of which it was inordinately heavy and because with the complexity of the mechanism and it really couldn't be stolen or misplaced. [00:02:12] That was the first advantage. That was also it turns out a disadvantage because they were so large and very expensive to service and to maintain.

[6] Title: Mechanical Solutions

Annotation:

Larry Bird: Well, [00:15:40] as a generalization, you could say that people in our country in the United States, the voting machine speaks to a certain— to my way of thinking, a kind of a mindset [00:15:53] that you can fix a political problem with a machine or that there is some

mechanical solution. Now we might think of it as an electromechanical solution [00:16:08] for the kind of problem-solving that involves counting, that gets at this issue of the one man one woman one vote which is the essence of democracy [00:16:26] and so in that sense, you could say, you could make a case that these machines are the perfect distillation or reflection of that. They're not [00:16:37] perfect and sometimes we do make mistakes, but, of course, this is sort of an aspiration or at least something that's driving toward that, toward [00:16:49] that goal, the one day in which everyone will vote and that not only will they vote, but their votes will be recorded and counted.

[7] Title: Singer Sewing Machine

Annotation:

See Figure 2 and 3: SingerSewingMachineNMAH.jpg and SingerSewingMachineNMAH2.jpg

[8] Title: Combine Header and Thresher

Annotation:

Request photo from NMAH photo office

The Object in History: Voting Machine

[1] Title: Fraud

Annotation:

Larry Bird: Well, I mean I'm not saying that— I mean, there are flaws in any one of these systems because there're [00:08:19] people involved in these, but what it replaced would have been a system of paper ballots that, say, going back to the mid 19th century in the 1850s, [00:08:35] 1860s, '70s would have been a slip of paper with candidate names printed on it that would be called a ticket and these could be— And these were [00:08:46] actually distributed by the parties and even sometimes by the candidates, so you would pick up a ticket and put into a ballot box and that box [00:08:58] could be a slot-top box that was— you couldn't see through it, it could be a kind of a fishbowl, it could be— And the ballots were sometimes [00:09:05] printed on color paper to make them easier— more easily identifiable, and then they were hand-counted physically at the— and tallied [00:09:15] up at the end of the day's voting and there were—

I mean, the potential for fraud are manifest. I mean, it would be possible to fold up multiple copies of [00:09:29] that ticket and vote it as one but it would be counted as three, four, five. Also, there were instances where in San Francisco for a [00:09:44] city election, a ballot box was discovered with a false bottom that had paper ballots hidden inside it and although the top of the box remained locked, it was [00:09:59] possible to open the slot and mix those ballots in with the general population of voted ballots, you know, if necessary, so there were all kinds of— almost as [00:10:13] inventive as making a machine, things that were done.

[2] Title: “Arrest of a repeater”

Annotation:

See Figure 4: arrest_of_a_repeater.jpg (Request from NYPL)

[3] Title: “Stop Thief!”

Annotation: Thomas Nast's renowned illustrations in Harper's Weekly earned him the reputation as the nineteenth century's most influential political cartoonist. His popular editorial cartoons attacked the inadequacies of the post-Civil War Reconstruction era and worked to expose the political corruption of the infamous "Tweed Ring" in New York City's Tammany Hall. (LOC annotation)

See Figure 5: NastStopThiefLOC.jpg

[4] Title: The Shame of the Cities: Steffens on Urban Blight

(<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5732>)

Annotation: In the 1890s, changes in printing technology made possible inexpensive magazines that could appeal to a broader and increasingly more literate middle-class audience. Given the reform impulses popular in the early 20th century, many of these magazines featured reform-oriented investigative reporting that became known as “muckraking” (so named by President Theodore Roosevelt after the muckrake in Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress who could “look no way but downward, with a muckrake in his hands”). In October 1902 McClure’s Magazine published what many consider the first muckraking article, Lincoln Steffens’ “Tweed Days in St. Louis.” The “muckrakers” wrote on many subjects, such as child labor, prisons, religion, corporations, and insurance companies. But urban political corruption remained a particularly popular target, and in 1904 Steffens collected and published his writings on St. Louis, Minneapolis, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Chicago, and New York as *The Shame of the Cities*. The Introduction, below, suggested his overall conclusions about political corruption.

Introduction and Some Conclusions

This is not a book. It is a collection of articles reprinted from McClure’s Magazine. Done as journalism, they are journalism still, and no further pretensions are set up for them in their new dress. This classification may seem pretentious enough; certainly it would if I should confess what claims I make for my profession. But no matter about that; I insist upon the journalism. And there is my justification for separating from the bound volumes of the magazine and republishing, practically without re-editing, my accounts as a reporter of the shame of American cities.

They were written with a purpose, they were, published serially with a purpose, and they are reprinted now together to further that same purpose, which was and is—to sound for the civic pride of an apparently shameless citizenship.

There must be such a thing, we reasoned. All our big boasting could not be empty vanity, nor our pious pretensions hollow sham. American achievements in science, art, and business mean sound abilities at bottom, and our hypocrisy a race sense of fundamental ethics. Even in government we have given proofs of potential greatness, and our political failures are not complete; they are simply ridiculous. But they are ours. Not alone the triumphs and the statesmen, the defeats and the grafters also represent us, and just as truly. Why not see it so and say it?

Because, I heard, the American people won't "stand for" it. You may blame the politicians, or, indeed, any one class, but not all classes, not the people. Or you may put it on the ignorant foreign immigrant, or any one nationality, but not on all nationalities, not on the American people. But no one class is at fault, nor any one breed, nor any particular interest or group of interests. The misgovernment of the American people is misgovernment by the American people.

When I set out on my travels, an honest New Yorker told me honestly that I would find that the Irish, the Catholic Irish, were at the bottom of it all everywhere. The first city I went to was St. Louis, a German city. The next was Minneapolis, a Scandinavian city, with a leadership of New Englanders. Then came Pittsburgh, Scotch Presbyterian, and that was what my New York friend was. "Ah, but they are all foreign populations," I heard. The next city was Philadelphia, the purest American community of all, and the most hopeless. And after that came Chicago and New York, both mongrel-bred, but the one a triumph of reform, the other the best example of good government that I had seen. The "foreign element" excuse is one of the hypocritical lies that save us from the clear sight of ourselves.

Another such conceit of our egotism is that which deplores our politics and lauds our business. This is the wail of the typical American citizen. Now, the typical American citizen is the business man. The typical business man is a bad citizen; he is busy. If he is a "big business man" and very busy, he does not neglect, he is busy with politics, oh, very busy and very businesslike. I found him buying boodlers in St. Louis, defending grafters in Minneapolis, originating corruption in Pittsburgh, sharing with bosses in Philadelphia, deploring reform in Chicago, and beating good government with corruption funds in New York. He is a self-righteous fraud, this big business man. He is the chief source of corruption, and it were a boon if he would neglect politics. But he is not the business man that neglects politics; that worthy is the good citizen, the typical business man. He too is busy, he is the one that has no use and therefore no time for politics. When his neglect has permitted bad government to go so far that he can be stirred to action, he is unhappy, and he looks around for a cure that shall be quick, so that he may hurry back to the shop. Naturally, too, when he talks politics, he talks shop. His patent remedy is quack; it is business.

"Give us a business man," he says ("like me," he means). "Let him introduce business methods into politics and government; then I shall be left alone to attend to my business."

There is hardly an office from United States Senator down to Alderman in any part of the country to which the business man has not been elected; yet politics remains corrupt, government pretty bad, and the selfish citizen has to hold himself in readiness like the old volunteer firemen to rush forth at any hour, in any weather, to prevent the fire; and he goes out sometimes and he puts out the fire (after the damage is done) and he goes back to the shop sighing for the business man in politics. The business man has failed in politics as he has in citizenship. Why?

Because politics is business. That's what's the matter with it. That's what's the matter with everything—art, literature, religion, journalism, law, medicine,—they're all business, and all—as you see them. Make politics a sport, as they do in England, or a profession, as they do in Germany, and we'll have—well, something else than we have now, if we want it, which is another question. But don't try to reform politics with the banker, the lawyer, and the dry-goods merchant, for these are business men and there are two great hindrances to their achievement of reform: one is that they are different from, but no better than, the politicians; the other is that politics is not “their line.” There are exceptions both ways. Many politicians have gone out into business and done well (Tammany ex-mayors, and nearly all the old bosses of Philadelphia are prominent financiers in their cities), and business men have gone into politics and done well (Mark Hanna, for example). They haven't reformed their adopted trades, however, though they have sometimes sharpened them most pointedly. The politician is a business man with a specialty. When a business man of some other line learns the business of politics, he is a politician, and there is not much reform left in him. Consider the United States Senate, and believe me.

The commercial spirit is the spirit of profit, not patriotism; of credit, not honor; of individual gain, not national prosperity; of trade and dickering, not principle. “My business is sacred,” says the business man in his heart. “Whatever prospers my business, is good; it must be. Whatever hinders it, is wrong; it must be. A bribe is bad, that is, it is a bad thing to take; but it is not so bad to give one, not if it is necessary to my business.” “Business is business” is not a political sentiment, but our politician has caught it. He takes essentially the same view of the bribe, only he saves his self-respect by piling all his contempt upon the bribe-giver, and he has the great advantage of candor. “It is wrong, maybe,” he says, “but if a rich merchant can afford to do business with me for the sake of a convenience or to increase his already great wealth, I can afford, for the sake of a living, to meet him half way. I make no pretensions to virtue, not even on Sunday.” And as for giving bad government or good, how about the merchant who gives bad goods or good goods, according to the demand?

But there is hope, not alone despair, in the commercialism of our politics. If our political leaders are to be always a lot of political merchants, they will supply any demand we may create. All we have to do is to establish a steady demand for good government. The bosses have us split up into parties. To him parties are nothing but means to his corrupt ends. He “bolts” his party, but we must not; the bribe-giver changes his party, from one election to another, from one county to another, from one city to another, but the honest voter must not. Why? Because if the honest voter cared no more for his party than the politician and the grafter, then the honest vote would govern, and that would be bad—for graft. It is idiotic, this devotion to a machine that is used to take our sovereignty from us. If we would leave parties to the politicians, and would vote not for the party, not even for men, but for the city, and the State, and the nation, we should rule parties,

and cities, and States, and nation. If we would vote in mass on the more promising ticket, or, if the two are equally bad, would throw out the party that is in, and wait till the next election and then throw out the other party that is in—then, I say, the commercial politician would feel a demand for good government and he would supply it. That process would take a generation or more to complete, for the politicians now really do not know what good government is. But it has taken as long to develop bad government, and the politicians know what that is. If it would not “go,” they would offer something else, and, if the demand were steady, they, being so commercial, would “deliver the goods.”

But do the people want good government? Tammany says they don't. Are the people honest? Are the people better than Tammany? Are they better than the merchant and the politician? Isn't our corrupt government, after all, representative?

President Roosevelt has been sneered at for going about the country preaching, as a cure for our American evils, good conduct in the individual, simple honesty, courage, and efficiency. “Platitudes” the sophisticated say. Platitudes? If my observations have been true, the literal adoption of Mr. Roosevelt's reform scheme would result in a revolution, more radical and terrible to existing institutions, from the Congress to the Church, from the bank to the ward organization, than socialism or even than anarchy. Why, that would change all of us—not alone our neighbors, not alone the grafters, but you and me.

No, the condemned methods of our despised politics are the master methods of our braggart business, and the corruption that shocks us in public affairs we practice ourselves in our private concerns. There is no essential difference between the pull that gets your wife into society or for your book a favorable review, and that which gets a heeler into office, a thief out of jail, and a rich man's son on the board of directors of a corporation; none between the corruption of a labor union, a bank, and a political machine; none between a dummy director of a trust and the caucus-bound member of a legislature; none between a labor boss like Sam Parks, a boss of banks like John D. Rockefeller, a boss of railroads like J. P. Morgan, and a political boss like Matthew S. Quay. The boss is not a political, he is an American institution, the product of a freed people that have not the spirit to be free.

And it's all a moral weakness; a weakness right where we think we are strongest. Oh, we are good—on Sunday, and we are “fearfully patriotic” on the Fourth of July. But the bribe we pay to the janitor to prefer our interests to the landlord's, is the little brother of the bribe passed to the alderman to sell a city street, and the father of the air-brake stock assigned to the president of a railroad to have this life-saving invention adopted on his road. And as for graft, railroad passes, saloon and bawdy-house blackmail, and watered stock, all these belong to the same family. We are pathetically proud of our democratic institutions and our republican form of government, of our grand Constitution and our just laws. We are a free and sovereign people, we govern ourselves and the government is ours. But that is the point. We are responsible, not our leaders, since we follow them. We let them divert our loyalty from the United States to some “party”; we let them boss the party and turn our municipal democracies into autocracies and our republican nation into a plutocracy. We cheat our government and we let our leaders loot it, and we let them wheedle and bribe our sovereignty from us. True, they pass for us strict laws, but we are content to let them pass also bad laws, giving away public property in exchange; and our good, and often

impossible, laws we allow to be used for oppression and blackmail. And what can we say? We break our own laws and rob our own government, the lady at the customhouse, the lyncher with his rope, and the captain of industry with his bribe and his rebate.

The spirit of graft and of lawlessness is the American spirit.

And this shall not be said? Not plainly? William Travers Jerome, the fearless District Attorney of New York, says, "You can say anything you think to the American people. If you are honest with yourself you may be honest with them, and they will forgive not only your candor, but your mistakes." This is the opinion, and the experience too, of an honest man and a hopeful democrat. Who says the other things? Who says "Hush," and "What's the use?" and "ALL'S well," when all is rotten? It is the grafter; the coward, too, but the grafter inspires the coward. The doctrine of "addition, division, and silence" is the doctrine of graft. "Don't hurt the party," "Spare the fair fame of the city," are boodle yells. The Fourth of July oration is the "front" of graft. There is no patriotism in it, but treason. It is part of the game. The grafters call for cheers for the flag, "prosperity," and "the party," just as a highway man commands "hands up," and while we are waving and shouting, they float the flag from the nation to the party, turn both into graft factories, and prosperity into a speculative boom to make "weak hands," as the Wall Street phrase has it, hold the watered stock while the strong hands as the Wall Street phrase has it, hold the watered stock while the strong hands keep the property. "Blame us, blame anybody, but praise the people," this, the politician's advice, is not the counsel of respect for the people, but of contempt. By just such palaver as courtiers play upon the degenerate intellects of weak kings, the bosses, political, financial, and industrial, are befuddling and befooling our sovereign American citizenship; and—likewise they are corrupting it.

And it is corruptible, this citizenship. "I know what Parks is doing," said a New York union workman, "but what do I care. He has raised my wages. Let him have his graft!" And the Philadelphia merchant says the same thing: "The party leaders may be getting more than they should out of the city, but that doesn't hurt me. It may raise taxes a little, but I can stand that. The party keeps up the protective tariff. If that were cut down, my business would be ruined. So long as the party stands pat on that, I stand pat on the party."

The people are not innocent. That is the only "news" in all the journalism of these articles, and no doubt that was not new to many observers. It was to me.

When I set out to describe the corrupt systems of certain typical cities, I meant to show simply how the people were deceived and betrayed. But in the very first study—St. Louis—the startling truth lay bare that corruption was not merely political; it was financial, commercial, social; the ramifications of boodle were so complex, various, and far-reaching, that one mind could hardly grasp them, and not even Joseph W. Folk, the tireless prosecutor, could follow them all. This state of things was indicated in the first article which Claude H. Wetmore and I compiled together, but it was not shown plainly enough. Mr. Wetmore lived in St. Louis, and he had respect for names which meant little to me, but when I went next to Minneapolis alone, I could see more independently, without respect for persons, and there were traces of the same phenomenon. The first St. Louis article was called "Tweed Days in St. Louis," and though the "better citizen" received attention the Tweeds were the center of interest. In "The Shame of

Minneapolis,” the truth was put into the title; it was the Shame of Minneapolis; not of the Ames administration, not of the Tweeds, but of the city and its citizens. And yet Minneapolis was not nearly so bad as St. Louis; police graft is never so universal as boodle. It is more shocking, but it is so filthy that it cannot involve so large a part of society. So I returned to St. Louis, and I went over the whole ground again, with the people in mind, not alone the caught and convicted boodlers. And this time the true meaning of “Tweed Days in St. Louis” was made plain. The article was called “The Shamelessness of St. Louis,” and that was the burden of the story. In Pittsburgh also the people was the subject, and though the civic spirit there was better, the extent of the corruption throughout the social organization of the community was indicated. But it was not till I got to Philadelphia that the possibilities of popular corruption were worked out to the limit of humiliating confession. That was the place for such a study. There is nothing like it in the country, except possibly, in Cincinnati. Philadelphia certainly is not merely corrupt, but corrupted, and this was made clear. Philadelphia was charged up to—the American citizen.

It was impossible in the space of a magazine article to cover in any one city all the phases of municipal government, so I chose cities that typified most strikingly some particular phase or phases. Thus as St. Louis exemplified boodle; Minneapolis, police graft; Pittsburgh, a political and industrial machine; and Philadelphia, general civic corruption; so Chicago was an illustration of reform, and New York of good government. All these things occur in most of these places. There are, and long have been, reformers in St. Louis, and there is to-day police graft there. Minneapolis has had boodling and council reform, and boodling is breaking out there again. Pittsburgh has general corruption, and Philadelphia a very perfect political machine. Chicago has police graft and a low order of administrative and general corruption which permeates business, labor, and society generally. As for New York, the metropolis might exemplify almost anything that occurs anywhere in American cities, but no city has had for many years such a good administration as was that of Mayor Seth Low.

That which I have made each city stand for, is that which it had most highly developed. It would be absurd to seek for organized reform in St. Louis, for example, with Chicago next door; or for graft in Chicago with Minneapolis so near. After Minneapolis, a description of administrative corruption in Chicago would have seemed like a repetition; Perhaps it was not just to treat only the conspicuous element in each situation. But why should I be just? I was not judging; I arrogated to myself no such function. I was not writing about Chicago for Chicago, but for the other cities, so I picked out what light each had for the instruction of the others. But, if I was never complete, I never exaggerated. Every one of those articles was an understatement, especially where the conditions were bad, and the proof thereof is that while each article seemed to astonish other cities, it disappointed the city which was its subject. Thus my friends in Philadelphia, who knew what there was to know, and those especially who knew what I knew, expressed surprise that I reported so little. And one St. Louis newspaper said that “the facts were thrown at me and I fell down over them.” There was truth in these flings. I cut twenty thousand words out of the Philadelphia article and then had not written half my facts. I know a man who is making a history of the corrupt construction of the Philadelphia City Hall, in three volumes, and he grieves because he lacks space. You can’t put all the known incidents of the corruption of an American city into a book.

This is all very unscientific, but then, I am not a scientist. I am a journalist. I did not gather with indifference all the facts and arrange them patiently for permanent preservation and laboratory analysis. I did not want to preserve, I wanted to destroy the facts. My purpose was no more scientific than the spirit of my investigation and reports; it was, as I said above, to see if the shameful facts, spread out in all their shame, would not burn through our civic shamelessness and set fire to American pride. That was the journalism of it. I wanted to move and to convince. That is why I was not interested in all the facts, sought none that was new, and rejected half those that were old. I often was asked to expose something suspected. I couldn't; and why should I? Exposure of the unknown was not my purpose. The people: what they will put up with, how they are fooled, how cheaply they are bought, how dearly sold, how easily intimidated, and how led, for good or for evil—that was the inquiry, and so the significant facts were those only which for evil—that was the inquiry, and so the significant facts were those only which everybody in each city knew, and of these, only those which everybody in every other town would recognize, from their common knowledge of such things, to be probable. But these, understated, were charged always to the guilty persons when individuals were to blame, and finally brought home to the people themselves, who, having the power, have also the responsibility, they and those they respect, and those that guide them.

This was against all the warnings and rules of demagoguery. What was the result?

After Joseph W. Folk had explored and exposed, with convictions, the boodling of St. Louis, the rings carried an election. "Tweed Days in St. Louis" is said to have formed some public sentiment against the boodlers, but the local newspapers had more to do with that than McClure's Magazine. After the Minneapolis grand jury had exposed and the courts had tried and the common juries had convicted the grafters there, an election showed that public opinion was formed. But that one election was regarded as final. When I went there the men who had led the reform movement were "all through." After they had read the "Shame of Minneapolis," however, they went back to work, and they have perfected a plan to keep the citizens informed and to continue the fight for good government. They saw, these unambitious, busy citizens, that it was "up to them," and they resumed the unwelcome duties of their citizenship. Of resentment there was very little. At a meeting of leading citizens there were honest speeches suggesting that something should be said to "clear the name of Minneapolis," but one man rose and said very pleasantly, but firmly, that the article was true; it was pretty hard on them, but it was true and they all knew it. That ended that.

When I returned to St. Louis and rewrote the facts, and, in rewriting, made them just as insulting as the truth would permit, my friends there expressed dismay over the manuscript. The article would hurt Mr. Folk; it would hurt the cause; it would arouse popular wrath.

"That was what I hoped it would do," I said.

"But the indignation would break upon Folk and reform, not on the boodlers," they said.

"Wasn't it obvious," I asked, "that this very title, 'Shamelessness,' was aimed at pride; that it implied a faith that there was self-respect to be touched and shame to be moved?"

That was too subtle. So I answered that if they had no faith in the town, I had, and anyway, if I was wrong and the people should resent, not the crime, but the exposure of it, then they would punish, not Mr. Folk, who had nothing to do with the article, but the magazine and me. Newspaper men warned me that they would not “stand for” the article, but would attack it. I answered that I would let the St. Louisans decide between us. It was true, it was just; the people of St. Louis had shown no shame. Here was a good chance to see whether they had any. I was a fool, they said. “All right,” I replied. “All kings had fools in the olden days, and the fools were allowed to tell them the truth. I would play the fool to the American people.”

The article, published, was attacked by the newspapers; friends of Mr. Folk repudiated it; Mr. Folk himself spoke up for the people. Leading citizens raised money for a mass meeting to “set the city right before the world.” The mayor of the city, a most excellent man, who had helped me, denounced the article. The boodler party platform appealed for votes on the strength of the attacks in “Eastern magazines.” The people themselves contradicted me; after the publication, two hundred thousand buttons for “Folk and Reform” were worn on the streets of St. Louis.

But those buttons were for “Folk and Reform.” They did go to prove that the article was wrong, that there was pride in St. Louis, but they proved also that that pride had been touched. Up to that time nobody knew exactly how St. Louis felt about it all. There had been one election, another was pending, and the boodlers, caught or to be caught, were in control. The citizens had made no move to dislodge them. Mr. Folk’s splendid labors were a spectacle without a chorus, and, though I had met men who told me the people were with Folk, I had met also the grafters, who cursed only Folk and were building all their hopes on the assumption that “after Folk’s term” all would be well again. Between these two local views no outsider could choose. How could I read a strange people’s hearts? I took the outside view, stated the facts both ways,—the right verdicts of the juries and the confident plans of the boodlers,—and the result was, indeed, a shameless state of affairs for which St. Louis, the people of St. Louis, were to blame.

And they saw it so, both in the city and in the State, and they ceased to be spectators. That article simply got down to the self-respect of this people. And who was hurt? Not St. Louis. From that moment the city has been determined and active, and boodler seems to be doomed. Not Mr. Folk. After that, his nomination for Governor of the State was declared for by the people, who formed Folk clubs all over the State to force him upon his party and theirs, and thus insure the pursuit of the boodlers in St. Louis and in Missouri too. Nor was the magazine hurt, or myself. The next time I went to St. Louis, the very men who had raised money for the mass meeting to denounce the article went out of their way to say to me that I had been right, the article was true, and they asked me to “do it again.” And there may be a chance to do it again. Mr. Folk lifted the lid off Missouri for a moment after that, and the State also appeared ripe for the gathering. Moreover, the boodlers of State and city have joined to beat the people and keep them down. The decisive election is not till the fall of 1904, and the boodlers count much on the fickleness of public opinion. But I believe that Missouri and St. Louis together will prove then, once for all, that the people can rule when they are aroused.

The Pittsburgh article had no effect in Pittsburgh, nor had that on Philadelphia any results in Philadelphia. Nor was any expected there. Pittsburgh, as I said in the article, knew itself, and may pull out of its disgrace, but Philadelphia is contented and seems hopeless. The accounts of

them, however, and indeed, as I have said, all of the series, were written, not for the cities described, but for all our cities, and the most immediate response came from places not mentioned, but where similar evils existed or similar action was needed. Thus, Chicago, intent on its troubles, found useless to it the study of its reform, which seems to have been suggestive elsewhere, and Philadelphia, "Corrupt and Contented," was taken home in other cities and seems to have made the most lasting impression everywhere.

But of course the tangible results are few. The real triumph of the year's work was the complete demonstration it has given, in a thousand little ways, that our shamelessness is superficial, that beneath it lies a pride which, being real, may save us yet. And it is real. The grafters who said you may put the blame anywhere but on the people, where it belongs, and that Americans can be moved only by flattery—they lied. They lied about themselves. They, too, are American citizens; they too, are of the people; and some of them also were reached by shame. The great truth I tried to make plain was that which Mr. Folk insists so constantly upon: that bribery is no ordinary felony, but treason, that the "corruption which breaks out here and there and now and then" is not an occasional offense, but a common practice, and that the effect of it is literally to change the form of our government from one that is representative of the people to an oligarchy, representative of special interests. Some politicians have seen that this is so, and it bothers them. I think I prize more highly than any other of my experiences the half-dozen times when grafting politicians I had "roasted," as they put it, called on me afterwards to say, in the politicians I had "roasted," as they put it, called on me afterwards to say, in the words of one who spoke with a wonderful solemnity:

"You are right. I never thought of it that way, but it's right. I don't know whether you can do anything, but you're right, dead right. And I'm all wrong. We're all, all wrong. I don't see how we can stop it now; I don't see how I can change. I can't, I guess. No, I can't, not now. But, say, I may be able to help you, and I will if I can. You can have anything I've got."

So you see, they are not such bad fellows, these practical politicians. I wish I could tell more about them: how they have helped me; how candidly and unselfishly they have assisted me to facts and an understanding of the facts, which, as I warned them, as they knew well, were to be used against them. If I could—and I will some day—I should show that one of the surest hopes we have is the politician himself. Ask him for good politics; punish him when he gives bad, and reward him when he gives good; make politics pay. Now, he says, you don't know and you don't care, and that you must be flattered and fooled—and there, I say, he is wrong. I did not flatter anybody; I told the truth as near as I could get it, and instead of resentment there was encouragement. After "The Shame of Minneapolis," and "The Shamelessness of St. Louis," not only did citizens of these cities approve, but citizens of other cities, individuals, groups, and organizations, sent in invitations, hundreds of them, "to come and show us up; we're worse than they are."

We Americans may have failed. We may be mercenary and selfish. Democracy with us may be impossible and corruption inevitable, but these articles, if they have proved nothing else, have demonstrated beyond doubt that we can stand the truth; that there is pride in the character of American citizenship; and that this pride may be a power in the land. So this little volume, a record of shame and yet of self-respect

Source: Lincoln Steffens, *The Shame of the Cities* (New York: McClure, Philips & Co., 1904), 1–18.

[5] Title: Plunkitt's Plain Talk: Satirizing Steffens

(<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5731/>)

Annotation: The reform-minded journalists of the early 20th century were the ancestors of today's investigative reporters. Known as "muckrakers" (so named by President Theodore Roosevelt after the muckrake in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* who could "look no way but downward, with a muckrake in his hands"), these journalists published their sensational articles in the inexpensive mass circulation magazines that became possible and popular in the 1890s. The "muckrakers" wrote on many subjects, such as child labor, prisons, religion, corporations, and insurance companies, but urban political corruption remained a particularly popular target. Lincoln Steffens was famous for his investigations of urban politics. In 1904 he collected his writings on St. Louis, Minneapolis, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Chicago, and New York into *The Shame of the Cities*. New York political boss George Washington Plunkitt offered his own skeptical and humorous view of Steffens' book as one chapter in a series of "Plain Talks on Very Practical Politics," published in 1905.

On The Shame of the Cities

I've been readin' a book by Lincoln Steffens on *The Shame of the Cities*. Steffens means well but, like all reformers, he don't know how to make distinctions. He can't see no difference between honest graft and dishonest graft and, consequent, he gets things all mixed up. There's the biggest kind of a difference between political looters and politicians who make a fortune out of politics by keepin' their eyes wide open. The looter goes in for himself alone without considerin' his organization or his city. The politician looks after his own interests, the organization's interests, and the city's interests all at the same time. See the distinction? For instance, I ain't no looter. The looter hogs it. I never hogged. I made my pile in politics, but, at the same time, I served the organization and got more big improvements for New York City than any other livin' man. And I never monkeyed with the penal code.

The difference between a looter and a practical politician is the difference between the Philadelphia Republican gang and Tammany Hall. Steffens seems to think they're both about the same; but he's all wrong. The Philadelphia crowd runs up against the penal code. Tammany don't. The Philadelphians ain't satisfied with robbin' the bank of all its gold and paper money. They stay to pick up the nickels and pennies and the cop comes and nabs them. Tammany ain't no such fool. Why, I remember, about fifteen or twenty years ago, a Republican superintendent of the Philadelphia almshouse stole the zinc roof off the buildin' and sold it for junk. That was carryin' things to excess. There's a limit to everything, and the Philadelphia Republicans go beyond the limit. It seems like they can't be cool and moderate like real politicians. It ain't fair, therefore, to class Tammany men with the Philadelphia gang. Any man who undertakes to write political books should never for a moment lose sight of the distinction between honest graft and

dishonest graft, which I explained in full in another talk. If he puts all kinds of graft on the same level, he'll make the fatal mistake that Steffens made and spoil his book.

A big city like New York or Philadelphia or Chicago might be compared to a sort of Garden of Eden, from a political point of view. It's an orchard full of beautiful apple trees. One of them has got a big sign on it, marked: "Penal Code Tree—Poison." The other trees have lots of apples on them for all. Yet the fools go to the Penal Code Tree. Why? For the reason, I guess, that a cranky child refuses to eat good food and chews up a box of matches with relish. I never had any temptation to touch the Penal Code Tree. The other apples are good enough for me, and O Lord! how many of them there are in a big city!

Steffens made one good point in his book. He said he found that Philadelphia, ruled almost entirely by Americans, was more corrupt than New York, where the Irish do almost all the governin'. I could have told him that before he did any investigatin' if he had come to me. The Irish was born to rule, and they're the honestest people in the world. Show me the Irishman who would steal a roof off an almhouse! He don't exist. Of course, if an Irishman had the political pull and the roof was much worn, he might get the city authorities to put on a new one and get the contract for it himself, and buy the old roof at a bargain—but that's honest graft. It's goin' about the thing like a gentleman, and there's more money in it than in tearin' down an old roof and cartin' it to the junkman's—more money and no penal code.

One reason why the Irishman is more honest in politics than many Sons of the Revolution is that he is grateful to the country and the city that gave him protection and prosperity when he was driven by oppression from the Emerald Isle. Say, that sentence is fine, ain't it? I'm goin' to get some literary feller to work it over into poetry for next St. Patrick's Day dinner.

Yes, the Irishman is grateful. His one thought is to serve the city which gave him a home. He has this thought even before he lands in New York, for his friends here often have a good place in one of the city departments picked out for him while he is still in the old country. Is it any wonder that he has a tender spot in his heart for old New York when he is on its salary list the mornin' after he lands?

Now, a few words on the general subject of the so-called shame of cities. I don't believe that the government of our cities is any worse, in proportion to opportunities, than it was fifty years ago. I'll explain what I mean by "in proportion to opportunities." A half a century ago, our cities were small and poor. There wasn't many temptations lyin' around for politicians. There was hardly anything to steal, and hardly any opportunities for even honest graft. A city could count its money every night before goin' to bed, and if three cents was missin', all the fire bells would be rung. What credit was there in bein' honest under them circumstances? It makes me tired to hear of old codgers back in the thirties or forties boastin' that they retired from politics without a dollar except what they earned in their profession or business. If they lived today, with all the existin' opportunities, they would be just the same as twentieth-century politicians. There ain't any more honest people in the world just now than the convicts in Sing Sing. Not one of them steals anything. Why? Because they can't. See the application?

Understand, I ain't defendin' politicians of today who steal. The politician who steals is worse than a thief. He is a fool. With the grand opportunities all around for the man with a political pull, there's no excuse for stealin' a cent. The point I want to make is that if there is some stealin' in politics, it don't mean that the politicians of 1905 are, as a class, worse than them of 1835. It just means that the old-timers had nothin' to steal, while the politicians now are surrounded by all kinds of temptations and some of them naturally—the fool ones—buck up against the penal code.

Source: William L. Riordon, Plunkitt of Tammany Hall (1905; reprint, New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1963).

[6] Title: Class Versus Gender: Catt Taps Middle-Class and Nativist Fears to Boost Women's Causes

(<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5318>)

Annotation: In 1890, two competing organizations working to gain the right to vote for women joined forces to form the National American Women Suffrage Association (NAWSA). NAWSA campaigned diligently for the vote in a variety of ways, but did not achieve success until the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1920. This prolonged struggle entangled female activists in other important political and moral issues that divided the nation along racial, ethnic, and class lines, and debates over the vote for women often took a divisive tone. Some white women suffrage leaders were willing to use class, ethnic, and racial arguments to bolster the case for granting white women the vote. In 1894 (a year of extraordinary class conflict that included the national Pullman and coal strikes), Carrie Chapman Catt addressed an Iowa suffrage gathering and maintained that women's suffrage was necessary to counter "the ignorant foreign vote" in American cities and protect the life and property of native-born Americans.

This Government is menaced with great danger, and that danger cannot be averted by the triumph of the party of protection, nor by that of free trade, nor by the triumph of single tax or of free silver. That danger lies in the votes possessed by the males in the slums of the cities, and the ignorant foreign vote which was sought to be bought up by each party, to make political success. It made no difference whether that vote was usually found with one party or not (except that one has more respect for an open bid than for a disguised one), the corrupting influence was just the same. In the mining districts the danger has already reached this point—miners are supplied with arms, watching with greedy eyes for the moment when they can get in their deadly work of despoiling the wealth of the country. The hoodlums of Chicago gave us a forecast of their intent to reproduce the horrors of the Old World when their numbers are sufficiently increased, and every ship load of foreigners brings them nearer to their object. These men hold the government of the large cities in the hollow of their hands. There is but one way to avert the danger—cut off the vote of the slums and give to woman, who is bound to suffer all, and more than man can, of the evils his legislation has brought upon the nation, the power of protecting herself that man has secured for himself—the ballot. Put the ballot in the hands of every person of sound mind in the nation. If that would make the vote too cumbersome, cut it off at the bottom, the vote of the

slums. For several years past the proportion of men to women immigrating to this country has been increasing and has reached that of seven to one. In the five years preceding and including 1890, 1,020,032 men of voting age came to this country. And as in fourteen States an immigrant may vote, according to the laws of some States, in one year, or, in some, six months (as in Kansas), or in four months (as in Wisconsin), or in three months (as in Michigan), we can get some idea of their influence with the Government. Not only is the native-born American jeopardized in life and property, but the citizens of foreign birth who desire good government. It will be readily seen that granting the vote to woman and cutting off the vote of the slums, if it could not be otherwise controlled, would result at once in good to the nation. And those good men who fear that evil would result to woman by depositing her opinion where it will be counted, who yet, like Dr. Parkhurst, call upon woman to face the dangers of walking day after day upon the streets frequented by the men who have built up Tammany, to use their influence upon voters to tear it down, when a little piece of paper deposited in a ballot-box, which would take but a small part of one day, surrounded by no greater danger, would do the work far more effectually. This shows how tenacious of power men are when once possessing it, even when they mean to use that power for good as they see it.

Source: Woman's Journal, 15 December 1894. Reprinted in Aileen S. Kraditor, ed. *Up From the Pedestal: Selected Writings in the History of American Feminism* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1968), 261–262.

[7] Title: Literacy Test

Annotation:

See:

[8] Title: Property Requirement

Annotation:

See:

[9] Title: Constitutional Amendments Dealing with Voting

Annotation:

Amendment XV

Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

Section 2. The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Amendment XIX

The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.

Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

[10] Title: “The First Vote”

Annotation:

See Figure 6: FirstVoteLOC.jpg (Harpers Weekly)

[11] Title: Fighting Back: A Black Lawyer Argues Against Disenfranchisement
(<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5469>)

Annotation: The South Carolina Constitutional Convention of 1895 completed the process of disenfranchising African-Americans (and many poor whites). The state’s restrictive policies began with the election law of 1882 that used an intricate system of eight ballot boxes to discourage illiterate white and black residents from voting. The 1895 convention added a poll tax and literacy test, thereby ensuring that a coalition of remaining black voters and disaffected whites could not unite to challenge Democratic Party rule in South Carolina. A handful of black delegates to the convention raised their voices against this disenfranchisement. One of them was William J. Whipper, a Northern black lawyer who had moved to South Carolina during Reconstruction to become a rice planter as well as a Republican political leader. But when northern support for Reconstruction waned in 1875, so too did black political power in South Carolina. The Governor refused to sign a commission for the judgeship to which Whipper had been elected by the state legislature. In this speech to the Convention, Whipper argued for retaining African-American voting rights.

[W. J. Whipper:] I am not here as a suppliant, nor do I put myself and my race in the attitude of a begger. I am here as a man and a representative, not representing simply the negro, but representing the people. The fact that I am a negro has nothing to do with my status here. And just here I will digress to speak of the flippant way the term “nigger” has been used in this convention. I am a negro. There are five others here that are negroes. We are proud of it, and we hope to be able to do something in and out of this convention that the negroes will be proud of and white men compelled to recognize. . . .

Is the negro such a bad citizen that you should violate all law, human and divine, and chain him down? You have the wealth and intelligence. Now you say you musn’t let the negro vote because he will vote against you. The negro is an imitative being. This has made him valuable and a necessity. What the negro asks now is that they be treated as men. You say that you must rule this country; that it’s white man’s country. We are here to ask you to stay your hand and do justice.

When the gentleman from Barnwell [County] comes here and labors long to show that under the 15th amendment that the negroes were not entitled to hold office, I say, wasn't that a small effort. If the negro was not fit, how could he hold office?

Another gentleman—even here in the evening of the nineteenth century—comes and says the Bible justified slavery. He says he would like to have 100 slaves now. If he had them he would be worse off than any one of you. He would be taught that this business was unprofitable and troublesome.

We have only six of us here of the inferior race, and you have 154. Men upon this floor are clamoring for white supremacy, come here and assume dignity and call us niggers with the flippancy of barroom attendants. The trouble is “negro rule” and “white supremacy.” Was there ever any such thing as negro rule in South Carolina? It was the rule of white men, supported by the negroes. Ain't there more negroes than white men on your farms? Yet, don't your wife rule? In the convention of 1868 there were less than a dozen negroes and less than a dozen white men engaged in the work done there. I am proud of the work done in that convention. The way it has stood the test has shown that there was nothing dangerous in it. They had simply taken the best parts of other Constitutions. Most of the men were there to vote as they were told.

This convention, 'tis said, is to prevent negro rule and establish white supremacy. Again, as a matter of fact, there never was any negro rule in South Carolina. When was there ever a time when we had a negro governor? We never had a majority of negro officers at any time in this State. Indeed, there were only four colored men who ever held any of the State offices, and that only for a single term each. There never was a county in this State controlled by colored officers. In fact all of the important officers, clerk of the court, sheriff, treasurer, auditors throughout the whole State, with less than half a dozen exceptions, have been filled by white men. Does this look like negro rule? Even in the darkest hours of reconstruction, when the bad legislation led to the fall of the Republican party, white men held the offices; white men did the robberies; many of them Democrats of the deepest die, who reaped the rewards for their purchase of negroes. There never was a negro lobbyist parading the corridors of this house. They were white men. Call them carpetbaggers, scalawags, renegades, what you will, they were white men, and are responsible for the bad legislation. Charge not this up to the account of the negro. There was never a time in even old Beaufort county, where there were not more white officers than negroes. Is that negro rule? Beaufort never had a colored sheriff during the reconstruction period. Talk about negro rule. The negro could have ruled, but he has shown discretion. There was never negro rule in a single county or a single town in this State. He challenged the body to say if there was a town with a negro intendant and a majority of the town council. If I am wrong correct me. We could have elected such in my town of Beaufort. We are 20 to 1 there. Does this look like negro rule? Does that look like we want to trample on the rights of the white man?

Do away with this negro rule howl. When the negroes had a majority in the lower house, the only place where they ever had a majority, white men governed them. Things were done there that were against his protest—white men ruled. Bonds were flooded all over the State. Corruption was rife. I proclaimed it on the floor. The leading Democratic newspaper in Charleston was even subsidized. He thought a negro brought the fact out in full. That is a matter of record. I warned them to stop. But who were the lobbyists that carried it all through? They were all white men.

Some of them South Carolinians, some Democrats from New York. They must take the consequences. . . .

We are going to make this fight all along the line. I know that nothing I can say will change a single vote. I do say that sooner or later, God being always right, right will eventually prevail. We want you to understand that we have rights and they must sooner or later be recognized. We are testing the very ground work of this whole matter in the United States supreme court, and we will push it to the bitter end. We may go on to congress. We want this thing to pass in the very worst form it can pass.

Where township governments exist we then know every racial in the community. We are now going on with our fight and try to sap the very foundation of this convention. It is a duty I owe to myself and this convention that I tell you this—not in a threatening spirit, however. We go to you now and ask for justice. God is just and justice cannot sleep forever. I have spoken to you in the kindest of spirit. Whatever concerns mankind, this convention, South Carolina, all these concerns me. Your people today—the negroes are yours—are deeply concerned.

If you vote down my amendment, then fix the matter in justice to the negro and to yourselves. Remember ever that the oppressor meets a just fate. Remember, too, that:

"The laws of changeless justice bind

Oppressor with oppressed

And close as sin and suffering joined

We march to fate abreast."

Source: Paul D. Escott and David R. Goldfield, Major Problems in the History of the American South, Vol. 2, The New South (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath and Company, 1990), 180–182.

[12] Title: The Negro Disenfranchised

Annotation:

See Figure 6: the_negro_disenfranchised.jpg (Request from NYPL)

[13] Title: Protest at the White House

Annotation:

See Figure 7: 1917NWPProtestLOC.jpg

[14] Title: The Jailed for Freedom Pin

Annotation:

See Figure 8: pin.jpg (create still from video)

[15] Title: Protest and the Pin

Annotation:

Lisa Kathleen Graddy: These were given to the [00:01:23] women who were arrested and jailed for picketing in front of the White House in 1917 and 1919 and approximately 150 or so were given to these women.

It's women from a wide variety [00:01:41] of the American population. They're obviously the college-educated militant leaders of the movement like Alice Paul, Dora Stevens, but it's also immigrant [00:01:50] women who had been factory workers. It's women who [are] middle-class wives and mothers, not necessarily with a more liberal education, but who [00:02:02] are active in the cause, maybe had parents who were active in the cause. Harriet Stanton Blatch is, of course, a daughter of Elizabeth [00:02:09] Cady Stanton and grew up in the movement. It begins to attract more and more women as the need to vote, the need to have an impact [00:02:18] on American politics, American life, is becoming more and more critical to them.

I think a jail [00:02:35] door is always an evocative image and it's used again and again to symbolize freedom, to symbolize struggle against oppression. I [00:02:44] think that this is significant— What speaks to me is always the idea, the immediate idea that these women were imprisoned for this, something that we [00:02:51] take now so for granted that women should want to vote, that women can vote, but that they were imprisoned for doing so, that they were imprisoned [00:03:00] for protesting in front of the White House. Women were the first people to picket in front of the White House and now we think that's so normal that you can see pickets [00:03:10] at any time in Lafayette Park and this was— they were imprisoned for this, for obstructing traffic, of all things. Not for [00:03:19] protesting the president or for suffrage, but for obstructing traffic and that they were actually sentenced— The woman who received this pin received [00:03:27] a 60-day sentence in Occoquan Workhouse.

[16] Title:

Annotation:

See:

The Object in the Museum: Voting Machine

[1] Title: Accession Memorandum

Annotation:

See Figure 9: AccessionMemo-227298.jpg

[2] Title: Approaching Rockwell

Annotation:

Larry Bird: Well, in the 1960s, the curators here were developing exhibits and they [00:23:33] began to look for a voting machine. It turns that there was a company in Rochester that was— . . . [chit-chat] . . . The company of record historically made [00:24:18] these machines has— They still have a collection of them and they parted with two of them, gave them to the museum in the early 1960s and the one that we'll [00:24:30] look at or that we have— we've put on exhibit is the one that I described with the curtain and the unifying action of the levers [00:24:42] and that sort of thing, but it actually came from the company that had made it and had kept it as part of its business collection for all these years in Rochester, [00:24:51] New York.

[3] Title: NMAH Approach Rockwell

Annotation:

See Figure 10: RockwellRequest-005.jpg

[4] Title: Rockwell Responds to NMAH Request

Annotation:

See Figures 11 and 12: RockwellLetter-page1-008.jpg; RockwellLetter-page2-007.jpg

[5] Title: Rockwell Advises on the NMAH Label Text

Annotation:

See Figure 13: RockwellLetter-020.jpg

[6] Title: Exhibiting Voting Machines

Annotation:

Larry Bird: Well, we have all kinds of— First of all, [00:19:26] you have the actual existence of the different kinds of machines and today you have everything from the punch card machines to optical [00:19:36] scan reading kinds of machines and you still have the gear and lever machines, but historically you have the paper ballots and then you have the very simple boxes [00:19:48] and what's interesting is if you were doing an exhibit and you could represent historically all of the different kinds of ways that people have voted in [00:19:54] the United States and they're still in use in some small portion of the country yet today, so in the way the country still is pretty much a museum of [00:20:05] voting methods because it's all run locally by the states. I mean, the only thing that we don't do is stand on the courthouse steps and vote by voice. [00:20:19] That's the only way that we don't.

[7] Title: Voting Literature

Annotation:

Larry Bird: Yeah, that was a good question. To [00:37:19] familiarize people with the kinds of conditions in which they're going to be making a vote, candidates historically would distribute flyers or literature, usually [00:37:32] literature that show some kind of a facsimile of it. In other words, they would present a voter with the graphic layout that looked like the inside of [00:37:45] a voting machine and these are kind of wonderful graphic expressions, but they would typically only show, if you were a Democratic voter, they [00:37:52] would only show one row or they would show— Wendell Wilkie actually distributed a long, very long I guess piece of novelty paper that had little levers [00:38:08] actually attached with grommets that showed what you were supposed to do, so, in many respects, the kinds of conditions that you expect to find, you've [00:38:23] already found them and they show you well in advance of the election, but it comes to you in a piece of political candidate literature which is in effect an advertisement, [00:38:37] so those are the kinds of things, just that help— they're designed to be inherently graphic and interesting so those are the kinds of objects that [00:38:43] you want to see in a museum in the first place, but they also help explain what you're going to see, so in a show where you have these machines, it's [00:38:52] helpful to show that kind of literature juxtaposed with the device that you're going to be actually voting [00:39:03] and it can be— You can use it as kind of campaign promotional literature but it also helps explain the objects that you're seeking to explain, [00:39:11] making it better understood.

[8] Title: Willkie Novelty Ballot

Annotation:

See Figure 14: WillkieNovelty.jpg (request from NMAH)

[9-12] Other voting Machines and Posters