

MISSOURI SUFFRAGE TRAILBLAZERS: NINETEENTH CENTURY



Virginia Minor (1824-1984)

After taking an active role in the Ladies' Union Aid Society in St. Louis during the American Civil War, Virginia Minor helped form the nation's first women's suffrage organization - the Woman Suffrage Association of Missouri - in 1867 and was elected its first president. In 1869 the WSA hosted the state's first suffrage convention in St. Louis.

Minor attempted to register to vote during the election of 1872 but was turned away. In response, Minor and her husband, attorney Frank Minor, filed a lawsuit against Reese Happersett, St. Louis city registrar, arguing she was entitled to the right to vote as a U.S. citizen under the Fourteenth Amendment. After the Supreme Court of Missouri ruled against Minor, she appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1874, but the decision was upheld. (Image courtesy of the Library of Congress.)

Phoebe Wilson Couzins (1842-1913)

A fellow member of the Ladies' Union Aid Society in St. Louis, Phoebe Couzins became the first female law graduate of Washington University School of Law in St. Louis in 1871. After joining the St. Louis Woman Suffrage Association, Couzins travelled the country speaking alongside renowned suffragists Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

She also addressed the House Judiciary Committee three times on behalf of women's right to vote. In 1884 she began working for her father, U.S. Marshal for the Eastern District of Missouri, as a deputy. Upon his death in 1887, President Grover Cleveland named Couzins interim U.S. marshal, making her the country's first female U.S. marshal, a position she held for two months. (Image courtesy of the State Historical Society of Missouri.)



Anna Lansing Clapp (1814-1889)

Anna Clapp served as the only president of the St. Louis Ladies' Union Aid Society during the American Civil War and, alongside contemporary Virginia Minor, officiated at the first meeting of the Woman Suffrage Association of Missouri held in May 1867. (Image courtesy of the Missouri History Museum.)

Annie White Baxter (1864-1944)

In 1890 Annie White Baxter became the first woman elected to public office in Missouri as County Clerk of Jasper County, Missouri. In 1908 Baxter was appointed State Registrar of Lands, a position she held until 1916. (Image courtesy of the State Historical Society of Missouri.)

