

suffragewagon.org



A New Year's Story of Stubborn Spirit

from Marguerite Kearns



December 30, 2011

Dear <<First Name>>,

I'm sending you a special New Year's story about how rain, snow, sleet, or blisters couldn't stop a Votes for Women march from New York City to Albany in January in 1914. I like to call it a story about a stubborn streak of spirit.

When suffrage hike leader Rosalie Jones ordered, "**Forward, March,**" my grandmother Edna Kearns, grandfather Wilmer Kearns, and their young daughter Se highlighted in the *NY Tribune* photo below on January 1, 1914 when they joined the hike to see the governor about votes for women. This group of 30 people f set out from Manhattan on that freezing winter day with high spirits. Only three hikers made it the entire 166 miles in six days. For the rest --including my gran the event became part of family oral history for a job well done, which was making a social issue visible. This visibility led to change.

No one could have predicted 98 years ago that women voters would play a pivotal role in the upcoming 2012 election. Back then, merely joining a march to AL

Before 1914, some crowds jeered suffrage hikers along the march routes.

The tide of public opinion shifted somewhat by 1914, and the hikers to Albany were cheered on as they headed north. The activists were tough. They stuck v more on-the-ground organizing before New York State women finally won the vote in 1917. And it wasn't until 1920 when all American women were able to e

The story of the 1914 suffrage march stands the test of time because it is part political and part human interest --plus a little romance, sore feet, and spin villages along the route. The Votes for Women hikers attracted widespread media attention, and they rallied supporters throughout the Hudson Valley. Media ac popular in their day:

- Check out [Grandmother Edna Kearns' march report](#), *Brooklyn Eagle*
- Read [March story #1](#) [March story #2](#) as told by the *NY Tribune*

- Discover what [happened when suffrage hikers encountered a snowstorm](#) in Saugerties, NY
- [And find out about the governor's response](#) in Albany, NY

The suffrage hike to Albany in 1914, by itself, didn't turn the tide. The drama of people marching during inclement weather to make a point, however, put officials who were slowly getting used to the idea of profound change . . . in this case, women voting. Because of other hikes and other demonstrations like this a persistent and substantial issue at the state capitol, as well as on local and regional levels.

By telling stories about the suffragists' work and their eventual victory, I'm doing what I love --bringing to life the commitment of these brave souls who protested, sang, attended meetings and tea receptions, formed coalitions, and organized their communities from top to bottom. Some Votes for Women activists Milholland gave her life for the cause after she died on the suffrage campaign trail out in the West. Stories like these represent a compelling part of American history and opportunities in the future for us to continue spreading the word. One hundred years of women voting will be celebrated in NYS in 1917, and the centennial of 2020.

I'm headed into the New Year continuing to speak about these brave suffragists at school events, gatherings in libraries, and a variety of community venues. I can't tell you how many people who've told me after a presentation: "I didn't know that winning the vote was so difficult and how it involved so many people for so long. I can't take that again." A high school student said: "I didn't realize these women were so brave and determined."

Women's suffrage as a nonviolent social change movement is a tale worth telling because it's so inspiring. And there's nothing like being in touch today with those who realize that voting is a precious right which must be used, protected, and celebrated --especially as we head into an election season. Getting out the women's vote is predicted to be a significant factor in the 2012 presidential election outcome.

Will women voters stay home in 2012? Or march to the polls, hell or high water? This question is asked often these days, especially in light of the attempts by the nation to limit the number of voters by new requirements and regulations. By bridging the gap between ourselves and the suffragists, we can see the value of their work in light.

If you're wondering why you received this story about the New Year's march to Albany, it's because I know you personally, you're a family member, a film campaign, an observer of the political scene, or part of a growing group of individuals who would like to see Edna Kearns' suffrage campaign wagon exhibit in New York State in the future.

If you're on this list by mistake, there's an "unsubscribe" link below. By remaining on this list, you can sit back and let me take you for a ride in my role as a narrator of four quarterly issues of a special free newsletter in 2012 that includes print, photos, audio, and video.

You can also read updates on the Suffrage Wagon News Channel (suffragewagon.org). Sign up through [Kindle](#), the [blog](#), [web site](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), or [RSS feed](#).

I raise all sorts of questions in these postings, such as . . .

What messages are the suffragists sending us today? Here's a sampling:

- *Don't give up. If you believe in something --go for it*
- *Be visible and vocal in identifying yourself and your issues*
- *"Forward, March" when facing the challenges in your path*

As I explore this material, I'm realizing the many ways **the suffragists were "there" for us.**

Let's be "there" for them by carrying on their work of social justice, freedom and democracy.

I'll be uncovering more stories from my grandmother Edna's archives in the months ahead about Votes for Women organizing on Long Island and in New York City. I'm also doing my ongoing work to finish a short film about my grandmother and the movement. All of this creative activity depends on the feedback and encouragement from you. Thank you for your support from The Puffin Foundation, the Floating Foundation of Photography, participants in the Kickstarter campaign, and others. Thank you. Because of you I can continue working with this provocative material.

March alongside me during 2012 by staying in touch. Pass the word about the strong shoulders on which we stand, and [subscribe](#).

I'm counting on a peaceful and productive new year here in northern New Mexico and elsewhere as I travel to bring these suffrage tales to a broader audience.

All the best!

Marguerite Kearns

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P.S. I've marked the Kearns family in the Tribune photo below. Grandmother Edna represents the tens of thousands of our grandmothers, great grandmothers, and great-great grandmothers who won the vote during the 72 years of this extremely important American civil rights struggle. Hitch a ride with me on Edna's suffrage campaign wagon, the "Spirit of 1776" and enjoy the adventure on [suffragewagon.org](#)



SUFFRAGE MARCHERS LED BY "GENERAL" ROSALIE JONES.



FIGHT ON TO LIQUOR SA...

Baltimore Champ Big Battle for Saloon Lea...

FIRST ATTACK BE ON LEGI...

Local Prohibition Offered—Churches State-Wide Cr...

Scenes of revelry such as were witnessed in many New York saloons and cafes on New Year's Eve have become a thing of the past. The opponent to such forms of amusement is the advent of the new year. In the city yesterday in the presence of H. Anderson, of Baltimore, signed the position of Superintendent of the Anti-Saloon League of Maryland to conduct a campaign against the sale of intoxicating liquor in New York. Mr. Anderson has been appointed superintendent of the league. Progressive efforts to restrict the sale of liquor, with the ultimate aim of abolishing it altogether, are to be maintained by the new cha...

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Grandmother Edna Kearns' suffrage campaign wagon was on display in 2010 at the New York State Museum in Albany, NY (see photo below). I have my future the museum will be able to put the campaign wagon on permanent exhibit to educate current and future generations about the Votes for Women m...



Your support of the suffrage campaign wagon is deeply appreciated. Thank you.

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