



The rotunda of the Capitol, where the statues of the suffrage pioneers will be placed by the Woman's Party as a lasting memorial to the work of women for women.

## The History of the Suffrage Statues

By Ida Husted Harper

**T**HE older suffragists of the country will hear with pleasure that the famous busts of Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, made by Mrs. Adelaide Johnson, are at last to occupy an honored place in the Capitol at Washington.

There has been a great deal of misinformation and misunderstanding in regard to these busts. The facts in the fewest possible words are these: When Miss Anthony used to go to Washington every winter to prepare for the National Suffrage Convention, among the young women there who always came to her assistance was Mrs. Johnson, who was then beginning her work as a sculptor. She was very desirous of making a bust of Miss Anthony and it was finally decided that this should be done and it should be exhibited at the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893. Miss Anthony, as was characteristic of her, insisted that the busts of her co-workers, Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, should be made at the same time. The entire matter was taken in charge by a self-constituted committee of three—Mrs. Jane H. Spofford, whose husband for many years had been the manager of the Riggs House in Washington, always the headquarters of the conventions; Mrs. Henrietta Banker, of New York, a woman of means and an ardent suffragist, and Mrs. Jean Brooks Greenleaf, of Rochester, N. Y., whose husband was a member of Congress, and who, like his wife, had always given loyal support to Miss Anthony and her cause. Mrs. Greenleaf was president of the New York State Suffrage Association. Mrs. Mott was not living, but Mrs. Stanton went to Miss Anthony's home in Rochester for the sittings.

The committee agreed to raise the money to send Mrs. Johnson to Rome and to arrange that at the close of the Exposition the marbles should be placed in the Capitol at Washington. Mrs. Johnson and this committee made a contract to this effect; one thousand dollars was to be paid when she started to Rome, one thousand when the work

was completed and one thousand when it was delivered at the Capitol. At no time were there any other parties to this contract and the National American Woman Suffrage Association was never connected with it in any way. This was by no means a sufficient amount of money for the work, but neither the committee nor Mrs. Johnson realized it. She went to Rome, completed her task and brought the three busts to New York, but by this time the first two thousand dollars were entirely exhausted. Miss Anthony advanced the money to send them to Chicago and Mrs. Johnson returned it to her in a very short time.

The busts were exhibited in the Woman's Building and were admired by thousands during the Exposition. When it was over they had to be sent to Washington. The moving of sculpture is very expensive and Mrs. Johnson had not the funds with which to send them there. This committee and Miss Anthony had collected by private subscription the first two thousand dollars and had in hand about three hundred of the third thousand. As it was supposed that it would not be long before the busts were placed in the Capitol, they advanced this money. The busts were exhibited at Mrs. Johnson's studio in Washington and moved about from place to place until \$325 altogether had been expended. Mr. and Mrs. Spofford left Washington to make their home in Maine and there was no one to do the strenuous work that would be necessary to get the busts in the Capitol. Everybody seemed to think that they would not be accepted, and, so far as can be learned, the committee did not make inquiries on this point before going into the contract with Mrs. Johnson. No one else was authorized to act and when she gave up her studio and removed to New York, she placed the busts in the Corcoran Gallery in Washington and they were there for many years as a loan. Finally the space was needed and Mrs. Johnson put them in storage where they have remained to this day at her expense.

Miss Anthony had gathered from friends about half of what was still unpaid on the last thousand dollars, and Mrs. William Tindall, of Washington, had collected in that city the rest of it and put it in bank. The years went by and nothing further was done. Miss Anthony was much distressed over the situation, and because of this the board of the National Association at intervals would bring up the subject at their annual conventions for discussion, but nobody ever went to the root of it and made a decided attempt to have the busts placed in the Capitol. At various times demands were made on Mrs. Johnson to deliver the busts to the National Association, but it had not the slightest claim on them and in those days had no headquarters where they could be placed temporarily, if she had been willing to allow this to be done. A great deal of hard feeling sprang up and the matter became one of unpleasant controversy. At one convention in Washington the busts were displayed in a beautifully draped private box at the theater by Miss Anthony's wish, and Mrs. Johnson undertook to present a written report of the transaction. It was long and she was not permitted to finish it. The busts went back to storage and no further action was taken.

#### Period of Inaction

As Miss Anthony grew old she worried a great deal over this matter. Mrs. Johnson was paying storage on the busts; nobody was receiving any benefit from them; disagreeable and incorrect stories were circulated and ill-feeling increased among the members of the National Association, who did not understand that it had no authority whatever to ask for the delivery of the busts. Meanwhile Mrs. Banker and Mrs. Spofford died and Mrs. Greenleaf was growing old. At her death no one would have authority to pay over the remainder of the money and arrange for placing the busts in the Capitol, if this should be possible. I had long been disturbed over the affair, but never had taken the slightest part in it. Now I asked Mrs. Greenleaf to give me power of attorney to act after she had passed away, which she gladly did, having it made out in proper legal form. I think this was in 1904, but am not sure.

After receiving this power I then took the first step that ever had been directly made to ascertain whether the busts would be accepted by Congress for the Capitol. I learned that the proper person to consult was the chairman of the Library Committee of Congress, who at that time was Representative Samuel W. McCall, of Massachusetts. In my interview with him he said he was a suffragist and that he would like very much to have the marbles placed in the Capitol, but that it would be absolutely useless to make the attempt at that time. He said, however, he had no doubt that after the Federal Amendment had been adopted and the women of the country enfranchised there would be no difficulty about securing their acceptance by Congress.

#### After Miss Anthony's Death

In 1906 Miss Anthony died and left the part of the bust fund which she had collected in the custody of the official board of the National Association, to be paid to Mrs. Johnson if the time ever should come when the terms of the contract could be fulfilled. The association by this time had established headquarters in the basement of the court house at Warren, Ohio, the home of Mrs. Upton, the national treasurer. The board made a formal request of Mrs. Johnson to deliver the busts at those headquarters and the money would be paid to her. As the National Association was not a party to the contract, and as this called for their delivery at the Capitol in Washington, and as they were made with the distinct understanding that they were to be placed there, she naturally and properly refused to send them to the headquarters in Warren, Ohio. The money was then turned into the national treasury. When Mrs. Tindall learned of this she thought that everything connected with the matter

was at an end and returned to the donors the other half of the payment which she had collected.

There the matter has rested for the last fourteen years and the busts have remained in storage in Washington. This is as exact an account of the matter as can be given without going into endless details.

During recent years Mrs. Johnson returned to Rome and made three more busts from the same models, but vastly improved, and put them on exhibition in her studio in New York. I never had given up the intention of having the busts placed in the Capitol, but had felt that they must wait until the Federal Amendment was adopted. Mrs. Johnson and I both agreed that when the time came these last ones must be used instead of the first. They have been pronounced by all who knew the three women to be absolutely perfect as portraits, and by expert judges to be above criticism as to artistic merit. A replica of the first bust of Miss Anthony was a number of years ago accepted by Sir Purdon Clark and the art committee of the Metropolitan Museum of New York as a gift, and they stated that the other two would also be gladly accepted if presented.

It was my intense desire that these busts should be presented to the Capitol by the old National Association, which Mrs. Stanton and Miss Anthony founded, but it was made clearly evident that there was no hope of this being done. While Mrs. Johnson was ready, as she had been for nearly thirty years, to fulfill her part of the contract when the other part was carried out, it seemed only just that more money should be raised to pay for the later sculptures. She had never asked to be reimbursed for the large amount paid for storage. Therefore, when Miss Alice Paul requested for her organization, the National Woman's Party, the privilege of financing and accomplishing this important project, I felt that it was my duty, as representing the original committee, to accept the offer.

#### Mrs. Johnson Completes Her Work in Italy

Mrs. Johnson had long had in mind still further to enhance her work by carving these three busts out of a single piece of marble instead of putting each one on a pedestal, but there seemed no chance of ever securing the funds necessary for so expensive an undertaking. After consultation, Miss Paul and her board agreed not only to raise the money for it but also to have them made in heroic instead of life size. The actual cost, without any compensation to Mrs. Johnson for her work, would be many thousands of dollars, but they believed they would be able to obtain the money from the suffragists of the country, and this they undertook to do. Mrs. Johnson left for Rome the middle of last May to accomplish this gigantic task and instead of bringing the huge block of marble from Carrara to Rome, she went to the quarries there in the mountains to do it. With a force of skilled workmen she has been engaged on it since that time and hopes to have it completed by the beginning of 1921. Assurances have been received from the proper authority that the group will be accepted for the Capitol "if it measures up to the artistic requirements," and there can be no doubt that it will do so. There is no statue of a woman in the Capitol except that of Frances E. Willard.

Those who have seen these exquisite busts do not hesitate to say that this will be the most beautiful and impressive sculpture in the Capitol. It will commemorate for all time what Wendell Phillips termed "the greatest reform ever launched upon the world," and will preserve in imperishable marble the portraits of the three great leaders in the movement to embody this reform in the Federal Constitution. They should be dedicated with the most memorable ceremonies ever seen in that historic building, with the most prominent organizations of women in this and other countries participating, and to this work of art every woman should contribute as a thanks offering for her freedom.