

“We Wear Our Boots Just Like the Men”: Women’s Roles in Pacific Northwest Mountains and Society, 1890-1939



“A Group of Women by Mount Rainier” by Asahel Curtis, c. 1909, Washington State Historical Society.

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The 1909 Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition (AYPE) in Seattle, Washington was a prominent stage for the Pacific Northwest to present itself as a culturally and economically mature region. Multiple groups represented the region, including woman’s suffrage leaders; together with the Mountaineers, a local climbing organization, suffragists took the Exposition to the top of Mount Rainier. Expedition members carried an AYPE banner and suffragist Dr. Cora Smith King carried a “Votes for Women” pennant, “...and the staff was planted in the highest snows on top of Columbia Crest...” of Mount Rainier.<sup>1</sup> This moment demonstrates how both female mountaineers and suffrage leaders used Pacific Northwest geography as a backdrop against which to display women’s physical and political equality with men.



“On the Summit of Mount Rainier” by Asahel Curtis, July 1909, Washington State Historical Society

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1. Ida Husted Harper, *History of Woman Suffrage* (New York: National American Woman Suffrage Association, 1922), 677-678.

Women challenged their traditional gender roles and expectations in the mountains and politics of the twentieth-century Pacific Northwest.<sup>2</sup> Both spheres allowed women to demonstrate their campaign to become more equal to men, based on the arguments of both newer understandings of female capabilities and traditional definitions of womanhood. Though women did increasingly demonstrate their diverse aptitudes for leisure in the backcountry and labor in the front country, they also retained conventional theories of womanhood. They harnessed remnants of traditional expectations of women—piety, purity, domesticity, and submission—to justify their participation in the outdoors and in politics. They argued that these traditional gender expectations and their different, unique perspectives as women allowed them more equal standing with men, especially in their case for suffrage. Though not every female mountaineer was a suffragist nor every suffragist a mountaineer, an evaluation of these participants uncovers parallel trends in women’s continuing struggle for equality. My comparison of concurrent mountaineering and pro-suffrage activities reveals common socio-economic identities, personal values, and strategies mountaineers and suffragists developed uniquely as women to confront challenges they faced in a patriarchal society.

I will develop these claims by first demonstrating that only a wealthy minority of women, mostly unmarried, were able to participate in these organized movements. Second, I will show how these women shared unique community, creativity, and companionship in both front- and backcountry spheres; yet, at the same time, many women continued to perpetuate contemporary

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2. The “Pacific Northwest” has many socially constructed political, social, and geographic definitions. Since my thesis is focused on geography, I will be using a narrow physical definition of the Pacific Northwest, the western side of modern Washington and Oregon, from Mount Baker in the north to Crater Lake in the south. See: John Findlay, “A Fishy Proposition: Regional Identity in the Pacific Northwest,” in *Many Wests: Place, Culture, and Regional Identity*, ed. David Wrobel and Michael Steiner (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1997), 37–70.

elitist, racist, and heteronormative expectations in the mountains.<sup>3</sup> My third section will develop female mountaineers' self-perceptions and portrayals in relation to their male counterparts.

Finally, I will compare men's perceptions of female mountaineers and suffragists.

In order to understand the rise of mountaineering and the push for white female equality, one must first examine how the evolving concept of the American frontier impacted gender roles. Ideas of wilderness and the frontier were key to nineteenth-century American history and identity. The wilderness historically held various meanings—religious awe, fear, and possibility of conquest—until the federal government determined that large-scale settlement had overcome and closed the western frontier. This idea of closure and its immediate impacts were illustrated in Frederick Jackson Turner's essay, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History."<sup>4</sup>

Turner believed that the frontier had been a central aspect of American identity, and its physical challenges provided an outlet for men to exercise individuality, dominance, and freedom over the feminine, virgin land. Turner, along with President Theodore Roosevelt who promoted masculine attitudes and policies, encouraged young American men to find new vertical frontiers by climbing mountains, simultaneously instilling values of masculinity and self-reliance.<sup>5</sup>

Literature on the frontier not only overwhelmingly focuses on the impact of the closing frontier on men but was mostly written by men with little or no regard for female perspectives.

Therefore, there is relatively little research on the relationship between the wilderness and

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3. Throughout my essay, I use the term "backcountry" with Merriam-Webster's definition: "a remote undeveloped rural area"; on the other hand, my use of "front country" refers to an industrialized area.

4. Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," *State Historical Society of Wisconsin* (1894).

5. Maurice Isserman, *Continental Divide: A History of American Mountaineering* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2016).

David Wrobel, *The End of American Exceptionalism: Frontier Anxiety from the Old West to the New Deal* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1993).

Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1982).

women. My work will fill this gap by building off the already debated themes of women's roles in the West, gender role flexibility, and the changing Victorian ideals of womanhood and applying feminist theories specifically to the female mountaineers and suffragists of the Pacific Northwest.

The first mainstream study of women on the frontier, *The Gentle Tamers* by Dee Brown, categorized all frontierswomen into four stereotypes: civilizing gentle tamers, lonely helpmates, masculine hell-raisers, and sexualized bad women.<sup>6</sup> While Brown's book recognized that women were present on the frontier, his concepts are considered antiquated, and historians now avoid these labels in order to assert that the female experience was more complex, particularly in terms of increasingly flexible gender roles.<sup>7</sup> This fluidity was necessary for physical, economic, and social survival and productivity of the family on the frontier. Glenda Riley, in *The Female Frontier: A Comparative View of Women on the Prairie and the Plains*, argues that this understanding of gender is the foundation of female activism and liberalism in the region, as this flexibility demonstrated women's hope in the West to provide new opportunities for future generations.<sup>8</sup>

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6. Dee Brown, *The Gentle Tamers: Women of the Old Wild West* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1958).

7. Robert L. Griswold, "Anglo Women and Domestic Ideology in the American West in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," In *Western Women: Their Land, Their Lives*, ed. Lillian Schissel, Vicki Ruiz, and Janice J. Monk (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988).

Vera Norwood, "Women's Place: Continuity and Change in Response to Western Landscapes," in *Western Women: Their Land, Their Lives*, ed. Lillian Schissel, Vicki Ruiz, and Janice J. Monk. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988).

Susan Armitage and Elizabeth Jameson, *The Women's West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987).

Margaret Walsh, "Women's Place on the American Frontier," *Journal of American Studies* 29, no. 2 (1995): 241-55.

8. Glenda Riley, *The Female Frontier: A Comparative View of Women on the Prairie and the Plains* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1988).

Finally, the evolution of the Cult of True Womanhood is a running theme among studies of twentieth-century women in the West.<sup>9</sup> In the nineteenth-century, the ideal middle-class woman was pious, pure, domestic, and submissive. However, as Holly George notes in her book *Show Town: Theater and Culture in the Pacific Northwest, 1890-1920*, this ideal changed around the turn of the twentieth-century when “Victorianism was gradually being replaced by a celebration of leisure, spending, and individual fulfillment.”<sup>10</sup> During this transition, many historians, specifically Rebecca Mead in *How the Vote was Won: Woman Suffrage in the Western United States, 1868-1914*, comment on how activists used the traditional ideals to strengthen their causes, arguing that women’s unique and supposedly-natural characteristics gave them a different but equal standing with men.<sup>11</sup> This debate will prove a valuable asset to my discussion of women entering mountaineering and arguing for suffrage, as both used their uniquely female perspectives to legitimize their participation in traditionally male spheres. I will extend George’s study of women’s changing roles and Mead’s analysis of the western suffrage movement to demonstrate how these shifts were also occurring in the mountains of the Pacific Northwest.

Two themes of my paper necessitate disclaimers. Men and women both used terms now thought demeaning while discussing non-dominant genders and ethnicities. In order to respect and understand the contemporary society, I will be using the terminology of my sources which is

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9. The “Cult of True Womanhood” was first expressly studied by Barbara Welter. Barbara Welter, “The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860,” *American Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (1966): 151-174.

10. Holly George, *Show Town: Theater and Culture in the Pacific Northwest, 1890-1920* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2016), 11.

11. Rebecca J. Mead, *How the Vote was Won: Woman Suffrage in the Western United States, 1868-1914* (New York, New York University Press, 2004), 1. Norwood, 170.

Sheila McManus, *Choices and Chances* (Harlan Davidson, Inc, 2011), 175, 177, 203.

not politically correct today. These phrases will be italicized to maintain historical accuracy while recognizing that they are outdated. Also, my focus on white, European-descended women is an unfortunate, conscious decision. The Pacific Northwest had a diverse population including Native and Asian Pacific peoples, but these minorities did not have as broad or equal access to backcountry leisure activities. Diversity in outdoor recreation continues to be lacking and is a topic of further research and social justice.

Privately and publicly recorded sources connect changing societal expectations and ideals of femininity and masculinity at the turn of the twentieth-century. Federal statistics are the backbone of my demographic study, while personal recollections, correspondence, and articles written by women inform my analysis of women's perspectives of their outdoor participation. Much of this correspondence has not been utilized in academic research and offers new insight to the female experience. On the other hand, I use primarily newspaper coverage and private journal entries to uncover men's perspectives of women in the backcountry and their understanding of the suffrage movement. Together, these sources help to reveal who these women were, their relationships with each other, and their relationships to men both in the front country and in the mountains.

### **I. Demographics of the Female Mountaineers**

Most of the women who participated in mountaineering, voting legislation, or both, identified as upper-class professionals. These women could argue their equality to upper-class, educated men in power, though women's organizational structure provided a forum for new female leadership and agency to develop.

## Social Capital

Economic wealth and leisure time were deciding factors in the depth of women's involvement in outdoor recreation and other social organizations. Average male wages throughout the early twentieth century Pacific Northwest were adequate though not exorbitant or guaranteed. In 1914, unionized male laborers in Seattle, Washington did not have excess income or time to spend on recreation. Calculated in 2019 USD, the average annual income for a single adult in this demographic was \$35,298, a generous assumption under prime conditions that the employee was a white male working over 42 hours per week, 52 weeks per year.<sup>12</sup> Given the sexist policies in place at the time, one can assume women were offered even lower salaries. In comparison, the annual cost of living in Seattle at the time approximated \$21,254.<sup>13</sup> Most of these costs went towards basic housing and food and accounted for 60% of annual expenditures. Therefore, if a worker got sick, took time off, or was denied work, their remaining 40% of expendable income was strained. This meant that wage workers had to limit their recreational activities in order to prioritize and ensure their long-term financial stability.

Comparatively, organized mountaineering required significant investments of money and time. The women who participated in these groups had the wealth and social standing to engage in leisure activities throughout the American West, even beyond Washington Territory and State. In 1902, the Mazamas planned an outing to Mount Adams, charging members \$440 and nonmembers over \$520, including transportation and food (2019 USD).<sup>14</sup> Therefore it was

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12. United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Changes in Cost of Living In Large Cities In the United States," Bulletin of the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics 699, (1941): 63-65; all conversions made using <http://www.in2013dollars.com/>.

13. Ibid, 78.

14. The Mazamas were the first organized mountaineering group in the Pacific Northwest, founded in Portland, Oregon in 1894. Membership required at least one successful summit expedition of a glaciated mountain. The Mountaineers began as the Seattle, Washington branch of the Mazamas, but grew so large that they became their own organization in 1906.

financially prudent to become a member, though this itself required an investment of time and money to meet the summing qualifications to join and participate in regular meetings. None of these costs included required equipment which started at \$750 for basic camping gear, not more technical equipment necessary for higher altitude expeditions.<sup>15</sup> Additionally, a 1914 Mountaineers 20-day outing to Glacier National Park in Montana cost \$1,008 for transportation and food, again not including equipment.<sup>16</sup> This price, approximately 2% of the average salary, was not unreasonable, though the trip did require participants to take three weeks away from their work and routine activities. Some women were regular participants, like Lulie Nettleton who joined the Mountaineers in 1907 and, while working as an elementary school teacher in Seattle, contributed to the organization as an editor, poet, general staff member, and the official historian. Nettleton and other women took, or were given, extended time off from work and domestic responsibilities, sometimes multiple times a year. Additionally, women from more rural communities for the most part did not have the extra time or resources to engage in such immersive and time-consuming leisure and social activities, meaning that most participants were from centers of industrial and social prosperity. Therefore, between the memberships, equipment, and travel requirements for an enjoyable and safe backcountry experience, only those with expendable income and flexible time could participate.

The flexibility of this wealthier, professional demographic paralleled the identity of contemporary female suffrage leaders. Though Washington Territory granted suffrage in 1883, it was revoked in 1888. As the movement revived and evolved in Washington State between 1900

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“Mazamas to Climb the Lava Ribbed Sides of Mt. Adams,” *The Seattle Daily Times* (Seattle, Washington), July 13, 1902.

15. Warren L. Miller, “What to Wear and to Carry ‘Over Trails Afoot’,” *With the ‘Mountaineers’ in Glacier National Park* (1914): 28-37.

16. Lulie Nettleton, “With the ‘Mountaineers’ in Glacier National Park,” *With the ‘Mountaineers’ in Glacier National Park* (1914): 2.

and 1910, younger women took leadership and adapted to new political and social atmospheres. These new leaders who eventually achieved suffrage in 1910 were “often educated and professional women,” as opposed to the earlier generation of leaders who tended to be older.<sup>17</sup> In order to attain a higher education and proceed into the political arena, these younger women required existing financial and employment stability; when they went to the mountains, they brought this lifestyle and these ideals of equality with them.

As the suffrage movement gained new leadership of younger women, mountaineering also appealed to a younger, unmarried demographic. Young single women, as well as married couples, travelled through the backcountry. Nettleton differentiated in Glacier National Park that “The women's quarters were on one side of the stream below the commissary, the men across, while the married people were beyond.”<sup>18</sup> Aligned with contemporary social norms, single individuals of each sex kept separate living quarters. However, the single women were not cloistered and could engage with and develop deep connections with the entire party at the central commissary.<sup>19</sup> It is important to note, however, that it was not uncommon for only approximately four married couples to attend outings, sometimes making up to 96% of the group single.<sup>20</sup> While I will later discuss the influence of couples and families mountaineering together, the sport did grow primarily through the participation of young adults, revealing an additional parallel with the younger generations leading progressive causes. These young, more affluent

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17. Mead, 1.

18. Nettleton, “With the ‘Mountaineers’ in Glacier National Park,” 7.

19. Sometimes these connections were so deep that women found their husbands in the backcountry. For example, Phyllis Munday met her husband hiking in the mountains of British Columbia and later went on cartographic expeditions together, with their children. See: Cyndi Smith, “Phyllis Munday: Grand Dame of the Coast Mountains,” in *Leading Out: Women Climbers Reaching for the Top*, ed. Rachel da Silva (Seattle, Washington: Seal Press, 1992), 40–52.

20. Harriet Walker, “Summer Outing” (University of Washington Special Collections, Harriet K. Walker Papers, 5223-001, 1930).

individuals used their financial and temporal flexibility away from work and without a family to become more engaged in recreational and liberalizing activities.

### Organization

Mountaineering was largely a social activity, and this element allowed women to contribute unique, novel agency throughout their involvement. Most people began participating in mountaineering with groups that coordinated highly organized expeditions, and I will show how this resembled the organization of the suffrage movement. At its founding, the Mountaineers brought together people from around the greater-Seattle region who enjoyed summiting glaciated peaks and exploring western ranges. The organization was so popular that sometimes 300 Mountaineers participated in the annual outing. In order to maintain control over such a large group, “it has always been the custom of the Mountaineers to arrange in groups of ten, each in charge of a captain who instructs his company in the use of an alpenstock and general snow-field etiquette.”<sup>21</sup> This militaristic configuration created clear, male leadership over a large activity but also allowed a variety of smaller side trips to develop. Participants, including women, could choose to attempt a summit expedition or take charge of a smaller, tight-knit group to explore nearby sights. Similarly, the suffrage cause also benefitted from organization, however in this case led by women. Women’s clubs were influential in various social programs, and in the West they “expanded rapidly in the 1880s and 1890s.”<sup>22</sup> As younger women took charge and rebranded the suffrage message, women’s clubs transitioned from literary and cultural centers to powerful advocates for suffrage. Clubs were places where women “cultivated new friendships, expanded their horizons beyond the home, and more importantly, acquired organizing and leadership skills,” echoing the talents women developed in backcountry

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21. Nettleton, “With the ‘Mountaineers’ in Glacier National Park,” 14.

22. Mead, 2.

settings.<sup>23</sup> This arrangement gave women structure, leadership, and authority as they entered politics. Similarly, the format of the Mountaineers provided hierarchy to ensure individual safety and enjoyment while still allowing women to exercise their personal values and expand their skill sets, as they did in women's clubs.

## **II. The Female Experience**

Studying women who participated in mountaineering, suffrage, or both, reveals values they shared as women. Both the historical suffrage movement and more contemporary feminist theories argue that women have uniquely female perspectives that, though different from men, are just as valid and important to the public welfare. Tradition stated that women were innately domestic and nurturing; women argued this made them uniquely qualified to ethically enter public offices. Similarly, feminist studies suggest that women have a uniquely female experience in outdoor recreation. Rosemary Deem's theory, founded in Marxism, puts forth that women participating in leisure tend to value:

Solidarity with their own sex in a spirit of companionship, rather than competition; an emphasis on caring and co-operation; a lack of aggression and selfishness; enjoyment of everyday things and happenings; an emphasis on the creative and aesthetic aspects of life; a willingness to include rather than exclude others; and greater detachment from consumerist values.<sup>24</sup>

Though this is a more contemporary understanding of women, it does provide a lens through which to study female mountaineers' perspectives, especially compared to men. Deem's points – particularly a focus on an experience instead of competition, creativity, and solidarity – ultimately allowed women to build closer connections with one another. However, though these

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23. John Putnam, *Class and Gender Politics in Progressive-Era Seattle* (Reno, Nevada: University of Nevada Press, 2008), 91.

McManus, 177-178.

24. Betsy Wearing, *Leisure and Feminist Theory* (London: SAGE, 1998), 32.

women bonded together, they did perpetuate problematic ideas of unity and equality in the backcountry.

### Female Definitions of Success

Women participated in mountaineering to the same extremity as men though, generally, placed more value in experiencing moments together, a unique perspective juxtaposed to men's emphasis on physical competition. Recreationally and politically, women used their traditionally unique perspective to redefine and pursue multiple definitions of success. They participated in mountaineering activities varying in physicality, and many did aim to attain high altitudes and summits. Anna Louise Strong, an influential figure of the radical Progressive movement in Seattle, expressly felt connected to the Central Cascades: "This new-found wilderness became for me a passion; I began to seek more and more difficult climbs, new peaks to conquer."<sup>25</sup> Strong demonstrated women's capabilities to not only meet the physical demands of mountaineering but also their desire to continually improve themselves through new challenges, as she later worked and continued to climb throughout Communist Asia. Harriet Walker, one of the most detailed authors of her mountaineering involvement, noted that she stopped to nap on the trail "for some five hours and it did not seem long, nor was it lonesome, but I am sorry not to have been to the top of the Towers."<sup>26</sup> Walker desired to explore geographic landmarks, but she freely choose her outdoor practice that day, ultimately choosing a tranquil outing. By following their personal interests, women could pursue mountaineering as challenging as they desired, still finding worth in the experience even if they did not summit a peak. Walker demonstrates this de-emphasis of competition on the 1930 Mountaineers' Outing, when she attempted to summit

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25. Anna Louise Strong, *I Change Worlds: The Remaking of an American* (New York: H. Holt and Co., 1935), 48.

26. Harriet K. Walker, "Mountaineers' Summer Outing - 1931: Garibaldi Provincial Park" (University of Washington Special Collections, Harriet K. Walker Papers, 5223-001, 1931).

Mount Rainier. A storm forced her group to descend without reaching the top, but she shared that “although we had not stood on the summit nor written our names in the register, somehow we had the feeling that it had been a glorious climb and that joyous achievement had been ours.”<sup>27</sup>

This sentiment reflects Deem’s theory that women found personal satisfaction and value in simply being in the outdoors, not necessarily requiring themselves to meet physical milestones. Whereas men historically viewed the wilderness as a space to be conquered, women contributed a new focus on the experience itself of being outdoors.

This unique female perspective, connection to, and enjoyment of the outdoors became an important element of both the conservation and suffrage movements. Early female conservationists believed “white women were sympathetic caretakers of the land, but white men were materialistic and exploitative.”<sup>28</sup> This claim references traditionally separate gender spheres of nurturing females and productive males, as well as the western trope of the female “lonely helpmates” who solely focused on supporting men’s accomplishments.<sup>29</sup> As McManus has argued, women transferred the traditional belief of their pure connection to nature into politics, using the nurturing stereotype “to justify their political activism on behalf of the environment.”<sup>30</sup> By framing women’s traditional nurturing role as giving them a unique connection to nature, they harnessed this characteristic to gain political clout more comparable to that of men. For example, as the conservation effort gained popularity, Mrs. John Dickinson Sherman, the Conservation Chairman of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, utilized her position to influence the national, co-ed, National Parks Education Committee.<sup>31</sup> Women such as Dickinson

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27. Walker, “Summer Outing.”

28. McManus, 176.

29. Armitage and Jameson; Brown.

30. McManus, 175.

31. Robert Yard Sterling, letter to Edmond Meany, July 17, 1918

applied the argument of women's natural authority over environmental conservation to shape the broader politics of conservation, outdoor recreation, and suffrage. Early suffrage leaders believed that, as humans, women were equal to and deserved the same rights as men. However, the new suffrage leaders added complexity to this claim, as they "'wish[ed] to see women vote because [sic] women are different from men' and that this gave them a special perspective and unique abilities to tackle pressing social and political issues."<sup>32</sup> These leaders believed that women should be given more respect because of their unique perspective. Additionally, this argument was meant to be less threatening to the established patriarchy, as women hoped to gain support of moderates by using less radical terminology. In recreation, conservation, and suffrage, women embraced and gave new definitions to traditional feminine ideals and ideas of success, a central aspect in advancing the suffrage cause by making voting equality less intimidating to men.

### Creative and Social Inspiration

Many women valued reflection and creation, and the wilderness served as a source of inspiration for both creative and political purposes. Art, particularly poetry, was a common form of reflective expression. Though men also wrote poetry based on their outdoor experiences, women contributed a relative abundance of poems and poetry collections. Mary Roberts Paschall, a frequent Mountaineer, shared numerous poems with Edmond Meany, a professor at the University of Washington and President of the Mountaineers. Her poem, "To My Mountain Boots" specifically celebrates her success in the mountains:

The feet which bear me far and up  
Beyond the courage of the pine.  
Are bound with hide and shod with steel  
That never felt a fear of mine...  
My mountain boots, so worn and rough,  
Full many a scar for me ye bore....

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32. Putnam, 102.

Yet comrades of my wandering  
Where you and I go, Joy abides.<sup>33</sup>

For Paschall, the wilderness became a source of creative inspiration, providing her and other women with nature-oriented material about which to write. Furthermore, poetry was a socially acceptable domestic outlet aligned with the Victorian understanding of womanhood, and women used this creative power as freedom to express their physical strength and celebrate the friendships they developed in the backcountry. Since mountaineering was a social activity, many women found social rejuvenation that inspired their political pursuits. Regular mountaineers like Anna Louise Strong “embraced isolation and called it freedom....Like the pioneers of old I fled to the simpler wilderness from the problems of human society that I could not face.”<sup>34</sup> As the leader of a Progressive movement during the rise of socialism and communism, Strong and her ideas in the Pacific Northwest were attacked as harmful to American democratic ideals. The backcountry served as a place of rejuvenation for her cause, away from critics. Strong continually returned to the mountains, both in Washington and internationally, throughout her career, and these escapes from the city allowed her to refocus and reinforce her radical political efforts for women and workers. Her extensive autobiographical book repeatedly emphasizes her unique connection to and value of mountainous regions.

### Camaraderie

Community was a large part of the female mountaineering experience, and the camaraderie women expressed for each other reflected Deem’s analysis of women’s distinctive “willingness to include” and find solidarity with one another. This cooperation was also reflected in the new, multi-domain suffrage movement of the early twentieth century. Notably, women

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33. Mary Roberts Paschall, “To My Mountain Boots” (University of Washington Special Collections, Edmond S. Meany Papers 70-28, September 15, 1912).

34. Strong, 49-57.

included each other in order to increase communal support. Walker recalled when the women in her group looked out for her and she looked out for others. As she was hiking in British Columbia, “The party who had gone up earlier and faster were coming down...but one girl stayed back with me and we roamed around the acre or so of lovely meadowy top...”<sup>35</sup> This other woman made a conscious decision to wait for Walker and made sure she did not hike alone. Together, these two women were able to hike at their own pace for a more personally connected experience without any pressure to keep up with the faster group. Later, Walker explained how she broke her glasses saying, “a girl nearby heard my moan and thought I was hurt and came running. She bore the news down the camp...[and] I was met by Fuzz hurrying to the rescue.”<sup>36</sup> Though the broken glasses were not life-threatening, the women in the camp quickly reacted to an assumed emergency. One of Walker’s closest friends rushed to her, demonstrating the depth of relationships women cultivated together in the outdoors. Walker also documented how she became friends with Dorothy Swift, a mountaineer from Chicago, and when Dorothy returned from a summit attempt, Walker “felt she might like it if I went forth as reception committee, which I did, to my own great enjoyment, anyway.”<sup>37</sup> Walker was aware of the dynamics of the women in the group, even strangers, to make sure that Swift felt encouraged and supported. Therefore, whether close friends or strangers, female mountaineers looked out for one another’s physical safety and emotional well-being so that the group achieved its common goal of a safe, enjoyable experience.

Female mountaineers also developed community through women-only trips; these encounters allowed them to develop companionship through solidarity, gaining wisdom and

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35. Walker, “Summer Outing.”

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid.

leadership skills in the process. Women frequently went hiking in small groups together without men's supervision, for example when "Patience [Paschall], and [Walker], who are great friends, broke away and left the tea making to Mary Remy and set off to watch the high line party come over the ridge."<sup>38</sup> These two women had the confidence to leave camp in order to reconnect with each other without the domestic responsibility of tea-making. By creating a woman-only excursion, Paschall and Walker claimed their independence and agency over their outdoor experience. This willingness to adventure together in an environment that was not threatened by male dominance also led them to take leadership of their own group. Walker specifically mentioned the time she and her friend Doris "set off alone to see the world [as] this was Doris' first experience on the ice and she was thrilled."<sup>39</sup> This moment highlights Walker's confidence in her own mountaineering skills. Her confidence led her to initiate teaching another woman a new backcountry skill, notably in a non-threatening, exploratory, woman-only environment. Finally, these women valued intergenerational relationships. Walker recalled when "Fuzz and Crissy, an old-timer, and myself set off for the low ridge above the park. Fuzz was particularly eager to introduce me to her wind-blown trees up on timber-line, which she always visits and photographs."<sup>40</sup> This woman-only hike allowed women of various generations to engage with each other, share their values, and gain wisdom from others' more extensive backcountry knowledge. In the backcountry, women challenged themselves, practiced leadership, and

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38. Ibid.

39. Walker, "Mountaineers' Summer Outing - 1931: Garibaldi Provincial Park"; Women shared other tips and knowledge with each other, such as Fay Fuller, who in 1890 was the first women to summit Mount Rainier, who published her hydration technique, "discovered the best way to satisfy my thirst while climbing. Fill a half-used lemon with as much water or melted snow as it will contain, add a few drops of whiskey and you have a refreshing drink..." Fay Fuller, "A Woman Mountain Climber's Exploits," *New York Journal* (New York, New York), September 20, 1896.

40. Walker, "Summer Outing."

deepened respect for one another; ultimately, they built companionship through solidarity and trust.

The suffrage movement also evolved to include and learn from cross-generational interactions and inclusion of new demographic groups. These were acts of solidarity that enhanced the group's cohesion. The key to this change was the interaction of older and younger leaders. Although younger mountaineers learned more advanced skills from older women, younger suffragists identified the limitations of their precursors. They saw that "most of the older generation had no idea how to win the crucial cities, [and] recognized the need to disassociate from prohibition and to connect with working-class and racial-ethnic communities through their labor unions, clubs, churches, and settlement houses."<sup>41</sup> This tactic broadened the earlier generation's mission in order to achieve more encompassing support for the suffrage campaign. These various communities connected "by insisting on economic justice and equal political rights as complementary necessities."<sup>42</sup> Just as solidarity in the backcountry allowed women to focus on inclusive companionship, the suffrage movement gained power by increasing diversity and connecting with minorities, creating solidarity around universal issues of respect and equality. Women learned from each other's successes and failures to ultimately develop stronger, more cohesive and knowledgeable communities.

### Limits of Progressive Thought

Though these women fighting for equality in the backcountry and suffrage in the front-country seemed to grow increasingly unified around universal rights, female mountaineers did perpetuate controversial ideas of gender, race, and politics while in the backcountry. These internal tensions ran between female mountaineers themselves. The women of the Mountaineers

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41. Mead, 12.

42. Mead, 16.

met a group of women from a British Columbian climbing group, and Walker commented, “The B. C. Mountaineer girls from the nearby camp all wore overalls and thought we were quite dressed up in our breeches and jackets and caps. Most of us girls tried to look a little nice for dinner, and they thought we were too swell.”<sup>43</sup> This notation suggests a variety of ideals of womanhood and the imperfect unification of both mountaineers and the various groups aligned with suffrage. Therefore, though a common demographic of wealthy, young women participated in mountaineering, they still held divergent understandings of their roles as women and their expectations of femininity, particularly when in the backcountry.

Concepts and expectations of race and heteronormativity also entered the outdoors. These views of race and gender were typically conservative and limited. One female Mountaineer recalled how she returned to the commissary to find men with dark paint on their faces, and another time when she was “served by ‘Berenice,’ who in real life is dean of a college of education, ‘Mamie,’ who ordinarily interprets the law, together with other charming so-called ladies with queerly masculine voices and strides, not to mention cropped hair visible through breaks in mossy wigs.”<sup>44</sup> The use of *black face* and *Mamie* reveal how racial stereotypes and caricatures invaded the backcountry. Additionally, men dressing up as women, complete with wigs, acknowledged cross-dressing, non-gender binary identities, and gendered expectations. Though these men may have been expressing themselves, the evidence suggests a more reasonable interpretation that they were mocking these racial and sexual identities; the author did not comment on any wrongdoing but instead was amused by the scene, as though this parody was common. This instance paralleled the early suffrage movement that actively excluded black,

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43. Walker, “Mountaineers' Summer Outing - 1931: Garibaldi Provincial Park.”

44. “Impressions of the Summer Outing ---- Mount Rainier 1934” (University of Washington Special Collections, Edmond S. Meany Papers 107-12, 1934).

Nettleton, “With the Mountaineers in Glacier National Park,” 18-19.

Asian, and other minorities from their cause for equality, arguing that, “I am neither a *Chinaman*, Indian, idiot, lunatic, or criminal, and I stoutly and strongly protest against being classed with them any longer.”<sup>45</sup> Though white women viewed themselves equal to men, they retained aspects of their society that were still developing more inclusive ideas of equality.

For some mountaineers, the political climate of western Washington was too liberal. While female climbers may have wanted white men and women to be treated more as equals, they considered others too progressive. Talking with a group of women at a lake one afternoon, Walker recalled “the conversation ran along Anna Louise Strong...and that the remarks and opinions uttered were not in the least complimentary...She's long been a radical, a red, etc.”<sup>46</sup> Walker acknowledged that Strong was a “red” directly opposed to the popular understanding of democracy, and, though the women around her may have supported a liberalizing society, they did not support reform to the radical extent of even other outdoorswomen. Like the Mountaineers’ interactions with the Canadian women, this example demonstrates the internal friction within the female mountaineering community. Even while engaged in social reform movements in and out of the backcountry and championing their own abilities, mountaineering women were still influenced by contemporary racist and conservative ideologies.

### **III. Women’s Relative Positions to Men**

Women were, however, very aware of the lower expectations set for them by men. Even though women had varying degrees of men’s support to participate in non-traditional activities, which I will discuss later, these female experiences in the backcountry and in politics reveal how women had different standards imposed upon them by a male-dominated society. Women were

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45. Margaret K. Holden, “Gender and Protest Ideology: Sue Ross Keenan and the Oregon Anti-Chinese Movement,” *Western Legal History*, 7 (1994): 223-243.

46. Walker, “Summer Outing.”

aware of these expectations and developed responses, in both the back- and front-countries, to counter these inequalities and further the claim that women could compete and achieve equally to men. Frequently, they explicitly proved themselves as capable in order to challenge the patriarchal mountains and society in which they lived.

Most powerfully, female mountaineers were conscious of their lower status in the backcountry, especially compared to men. This awareness is evident throughout personal memoirs and publications that subtly acknowledged sexism. A group of women wrote a poem including the line: “We wear our boots just like the men; in trousers we are brave.”<sup>47</sup> This poem was recited at a Campfire meeting of the Mountaineers and, in a mixed-gender audience, not only asserted and celebrated women’s physical and emotional capabilities but did so specifically in relation to the male standard. In their view, women and men could wear the same clothes and summit the same mountains, demonstrating the authors’ awareness of different standards and how women were viewed. Other women addressed sexism explicitly. Nettleton began one essay by stating:

So much has been written about a man's outfitting for walking tours in the mountains that further additions are not necessary here. But of a woman's preparations less has been said. In fact the writer has heard certain of the masculine gender growl something that sounded remarkably like “Cut out the women when you hit the trail.” That misguided male had evidently been out in the company of women who did not understand equipment and had spoiled their own and their companion's pleasure by a lack of proper preparations. I maintain that women are magnificent trail fellows and for nerve and endurance can hold their own with the men.<sup>48</sup>

Nettleton recognized that she had encountered both overt and implicit sexism in the mountaineering world. Therefore, she used her status to further the development of equipment

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47. “Impressions of the Summer Outing ---- Mount Rainier 1934.”

48. Lulie Nettleton, “Some Equipment Hints for Women Walkers,” *With the ‘Mountaineers in Glacier National Park* (1914): 38.

for women and criticize sexism throughout the mountaineering world—both in the industry and on the trail. This same publication gave space to women to share their experiences hiking in women-only groups throughout Glacier National Park. Many women submitted their stories, and one group of women openly went to the Park because they “wanted to find out whether it was feasible for two women, unaccompanied by men, horses, guides, or other impedimenta, to follow the trails...”<sup>49</sup> This group knew that their ultimately successful attempt at solo travel ran counter to tradition because they were going into the mountains without male oversight or support. Therefore – in play, publication, and practice – women consciously addressed the lower expectations made of them.

Women were also conscious about needing to prove themselves in the backcountry in order to gain respect and rights. These statements confirming their abilities began in the early history of mountaineering in the Pacific Northwest. Fay Fuller, a distinguished leading female mountaineer, challenged herself to spend a night alone in the middle of Crater Lake. In her article reflecting on this experience, she argued:

Why should not I, an acknowledged Mazama, a mountain climber of long experience, one who had passed a night where woman had never before trod, and had tramped over the giant Cascades – why, indeed, could I not clamber down 2,000 feet of sheer cliff, row a few miles across an almost unknown lake, reach the lonely island, climb its nearly thousand feet of soft and sliding pumice, slide down a hundred feet of snow and ice, and land in the very heart of the crater – and there alone spend the long night? I could. Strength, health, courage – all were mine.<sup>50</sup>

This excerpt serves as Fuller’s unsurpassed resume and exudes confidence. However, Fuller included these sentences to add absurdity to the immediate response of the men with her: “As soon as I disclosed my plans, a storm of objections arose. There was one young man on my

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49. H. C. Garrott, “150 Miles Afoot and Unaccompanied,” *With the Mountaineers in Glacier National Park* (1914): 49.

50. Fuller.

side...”<sup>51</sup> Fuller felt the need to prove herself to the disbelieving male mountaineering world, even later sharing the experience in a national publication. This need continued into the mid-twentieth century when “unaccompanied women” were documenting their explorations of Glacier National Park. One group changed their itinerary to allow themselves more time at one location, and the author clarified that the stop was because “we were not so tired, even after our first day out, but that we thought it would be worth our while to see Trick Falls.”<sup>52</sup> In a very short summary of her travels, the author dedicated an entire sentence to explaining why the group stopped after one day—it was for the beauty of the park, not because they were weak or tired women. This claim paralleled assertive political statements in the front-country, as “growing numbers of women in the work force and in public life provided incontrovertible evidence of female abilities and validated their demands for equal political rights.”<sup>53</sup> Even so, women like Dr. Cora Smith King still felt the need to publicly summit Mount Rainier during the AYPE to clearly demonstrate women’s physical, mental, and emotional equality with men to summit mountains and navigate politics. Therefore, though they were included in mountaineering expeditions, women still struggled to be seen as equals to men in the backcountry, and they took advantage of countless opportunities to verify that they were capable of performing at the same level as men. Whether in the mountains or in society, women knew that they had to continually fight to prove their competence and strength in order to attain broader legal recognition.

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51. Ibid.

52. Harriet Middaugh, “Hard to Say What Was Enjoyed the Most,” *With the Mountaineers in Glacier National Park* (1914): 50; this term “unaccompanied women” was purely used for women traveling without men, regardless if they were with other women

53. Mead, 16.

#### **IV. Men's Perceptions**

Women took assertive action in their struggle for more equal respect, but they still needed support from men, as established leaders of the patriarchal society, in order to bring about official change. Therefore, men's perceptions of women in the backcountry are an important element to analyze, as physical and political gender equality were dramatic shifts from the status quo and men held varied opinions of female mountaineers and suffragists. Men thoroughly documented their opinions of women participating in mountaineering and reveal an overall trend of support and respect for their female counterparts from the beginning of the organized sport. Some men remained unambiguously opposed to female members, others more subtly so, but the majority of mountaineering men were open to or even encouraging of female participants. On the other hand, men generally proved more reticent to promote women's suffrage. The most supportive men commented how women could politic equally as well as men.

One of the most obvious challenges of the male-dominated mountains was that some men were not forthcoming to view women as equal participants in outdoor recreation. Some of the criticisms were explicit; Walter Eaton, a Harvard-educated literary critic, commented, "In this man's world...women gave up their ancient prerogative of screaming after an hour or two, in sheer weariness (all but the 'womanly woman', who keeps it up for a day), a set expression of terrified resignation taking the place of oral appeal."<sup>54</sup> Eaton was clear that he did not perceive the outdoors as a place for or appealing to women. In accordance with the traditionally separate gender spheres, he believed that women would only go outside if they were dragged there and tamed. Eaton reflects men's historical value of the wilderness as a place to dominate, counter to women's perspective that the wilderness held intrinsic value.

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54. Walter Prichard Eaton, "The Park of Many Glaciers," *Harper's Magazine*, June 1917, 1-12.

Other men were more implicit with their opposition and challenge to women in the outdoors. Men frequently expressed this discomfort through surprised comments and sexist climbing strategies. Fay Fuller, who did spend the night in the center of Crater Lake, was unexpectedly joined by two men in the middle of the night. She recorded that “The men turned swiftly, as if stunned, and stared at me. One of them stammered out, at last: “What! A woman here—and alone!”<sup>55</sup> Fuller was surprised because her solo experience was intruded upon by anyone at all, but the men were more surprised than she was at the fact that there was a woman undertaking the same feat—and by herself. This reaction reveals how some men did not think women were capable of the same achievements as men, and it also illustrates how some men were uncomfortable with women moving into new roles. While in Glacier National Park, Nettleton and a group of Mountaineers encountered a group of women traveling alone throughout the park. Nettleton heard a gentleman comment quietly: “They could not do it in the Fatherland.”<sup>56</sup> Though his reaction was not as upfront as the men Fuller encountered, he still saw the women as noteworthy for their non-traditional travel group. Faced with a new image of women, the man recognized changing gender roles, though he emphasized a traditional perspective of women. Finally, expedition policies traditionally protected and sheltered female climbers, as men were expected to escort women while on summit expeditions and aid them through difficult stretches of trail. Walker recalled on her Rainier summit attempt that “two more girls were mountain sick...and there were not men enough to spare to go back with them.”<sup>57</sup> While this practice did ensure the safety of the team by implementing a partner system, the plan assumed that women were incapable of escorting or assisting other women. In this case, men

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55. Fuller.

56. Nettleton, “With the Mountaineers in Glacier National Park,” 22.

57. Walker, “Summer Outing.”

actually held back the expedition because of their perceptions, as the whole group had to turn around because of this policy's guidelines. These male perspectives of women revert again to the idea of women as "lonely helpmates" who, as a sex, were not capable of the same tasks as men. These traditions and resistance to change also limited male support of woman suffrage. In the city, men "did not give the vote easily....men often viewed the demand for woman suffrage as politically *inexpedient*, even when they conceded its justice."<sup>58</sup> Fueled by uncertainty of how women would vote on issues after achieving suffrage, many men did not see women as needing the chance to have a political voice.<sup>59</sup> Eaton and many other men believed women should remain submissive in order to provide stability for male workers. Whether implicit or explicit, many men remained opposed to women's push for equality.

On the other hand, some men specifically commented on women's success in both realms and, though not fully supportive, were not completely opposed to women's participation in mountaineering and politics. The first organized hiking club of the Pacific Northwest, the Mazamas, welcomed women from the group's inception. One early male club member noted, "Up rocky steeps, down sheer precipices, fording countless rapid stream and creeks, the ladies have shown invincible courage," and another Mazama "could not but notice that the ladies in the party in most instances were as cool, if not more so, than many of the men and we were proud of the girls!"<sup>60</sup> These authors recognized women's strength to overcome the physical challenges of

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58. Mead, 4.

59. Many men countered woman suffrage out of uncertainty with how they would vote, particularly on the topic of temperance.

60. "To Name Mountain Peaks: The Mazamas will Explore Washington Wilds," *The Seattle Daily Times* (Seattle, Washington), February 3, 1899.

Dr. E. Weldon Young, "Mazamas on Rainier: The Ascent of 1897," *The Seattle Daily Times* (Seattle, Washington), August 14, 1897. The use of "girls" is problematic in contemporary writing. However, though the term is diminutive, it was common practice at the time for both men and women to refer to females as "girls". See also: Walker, "Summer Outing ("We had seen some girls sitting out on a precipice...") and Walker,

mountaineering and shared their observations publicly in newspapers. They acknowledged the varying expectations of men and women and alluded to women's potential superiority to men's mental resilience. Though the authors were patronizing and surprised like the critics, they wrote their comments of women's emotional capabilities with respect. Additionally, Mountaineers President Edmond Meany praised fellow Mountaineer Mabel Franny after she "had picked out a campsite for our tent which proved most acceptable."<sup>61</sup> Franny had gone ahead of Meany, meaning she was trusted to pick out an excellent camping area for the esteemed man; still, Meany commented on her choice, as though he had just realized a woman was able to accomplish such an honorable task. Finally, men also wrote poetry to convey female capabilities. One author wrote:

Right here with a cheer for the gay Mountaineer,  
So dauntless, so daring, so careless of fear -  
And fleet dart her feet like the shy mountain deer,  
While valley has dwindled and tip peak drawn near.  
She fears the snow bound slide?  
She dreads the glacier's glide?  
Throw back the jealous lie.  
Mark well her cry "Not I."  
That test which is best is the last mountain crest.  
'Tis won and her staff has the top lightly pressed.  
Again with our cheer for the gay Mountaineer  
All dauntless, all daring, all careless of fear.<sup>62</sup>

The man patronizingly notes the woman's light touch on the summit as a symbol of her supposedly-delicate stature, but he does repeatedly push back on the stereotype of fearful women. He accuses and challenges "jealous" men to acknowledge women's emotional and

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"Mountaineers' Summer Outing - 1931: Garibaldi Provincial Park" ("I recall that I was with only three other girls...").

61. Edmond Meany, "Saint Helens, Adams, Hood: 26th Annual Outing of the Mountaineers, 1932," (University of Washington Special Collections, Edmond Meany Papers, 107-6, 1932).

62. A. Roger Merrill, "The Mountaineer," (University of Washington Special Collections, Edmond Meany Papers, 70-28, August 4, 1909).

physical fortitude to summit. Newspapers also served as a forum of men's amazement of women's political aptitude. One reporter wrote that women "display as much interest as the men, and, if anything, more" in political events.<sup>63</sup> This journalist was surprised at not only women's abilities in politics, but even that they were interested in civic service at all. This paralleled the Mazama who saw women "as cool, if not more so, than many of the men."<sup>64</sup> These opinions directly discuss women's and men's capabilities in both mountainous and industrially settled spheres; as described by men, both women and men are repeatedly shown as equally competent, or even women more so, at carrying out strenuous tasks.

Women's and men's partnerships were important, as they frequently worked together to increase women's participation in mountaineering and in politics. Specifically, male family members served an important role in encouraging and supporting their female relatives to participate in outdoor activities, even in a male-dominated society. Men commonly introduced women to the outdoors and enabled their continued participation. Walker was joined by Patience Paschall on the Mountaineers Outing to Mount Rainier. Paschall was only planning to join for a few days and return later, but "her brother-in-law, Bill Remy, made her a present of the time intervening. She had packed up with equipment for three days and was now to stay three weeks...and the whole camp had a great time getting her properly outfitted until her sister could be able to send her things in."<sup>65</sup> Remy, a distant relative, recognized Paschall's appreciation for the outdoors and made it possible for her to engage further with a recreational activity she personally valued. Walker also commented that while the Mountaineers were in British

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63. Mead, 47, citing the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*.

64. Young.

McManus, 189: "the ladies were even more enthusiastic than the gents," National Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry, citing *The People's Advocate*, March 1895.

65. Walker, "Summer Outing."

Columbia, a notable mountaineer named Files was camping nearby with his wife and children; she also learned about her fellow Mountaineer Eva Nelson's participation with the Crag Rats, a backcountry rescue organization based in Portland, Oregon established by her brother.<sup>66</sup> Nelson supported the rescue operations as a cook for the rescuers, and, though this was a domestic role, she was able to participate on the front lines of a developing backcountry activity. Again, though some men did support women's participation in the backcountry, this did not mean that women had the same responsibilities or respect as men. Close partnerships between women and men also furthered the success of political reforms to enhance women's rights. In regard to suffrage, women aligned with male politicians, joined campaigns for male politicians, and worked with other liberal movements, such as the Progressives.<sup>67</sup> In turn, the men in both mainstream and more radical organizations reinforced structure and support for the suffrage movement overall. Women used the reciprocal backing from these groups to convince broader society of their cause, gain power for the suffrage effort, influence men in leadership, and accomplish social and legal change. These relationships, ranging from familial to politically expedient, were important in shaping women's roles in the mountains and society of the Pacific Northwest.

## **Conclusion**

Throughout this paper, I have drawn multiple parallels between the Pacific Northwest female mountaineers and suffragists. Demographically, the women who mountaineered and those who dedicated themselves to the suffrage effort had the wealth and social capital to afford these activities. Engaging in these activities required investments of both money and time, two

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66. Walker, "Mountaineers' Summer Outing - 1931: Garibaldi Provincial Park." See also: Cyndi Smith, "Phyllis Munday: Grand Dame of the Coast Mountains" for examples of couples and families in the backcountry. Walker, "Summer Outing."

67. Mead, 2.

elements that were accessible to a minority of more highly educated professionals but not to most wage earners.

Socially, women claimed agency, found inspiration, and worked with other women while both mountaineering and fighting for equal voting rights. Mountaineers and suffragists demonstrated a uniquely female perspective that, while different from men, gave them insight on how to strengthen society and protect the very mountains they recreated in. They valued these mountainous areas for various reasons, though commonly for the mountains' abilities to inspire creative and social endeavors. Finally, in both realms, women worked together to strengthen their community. In the mountains, women looked out for, traveled with, led, and learned from other women. In the movement for suffrage, new leaders realized the need to reach out to new communities and work together to attain their common, universal goal of suffrage for white women. Though these women expressed camaraderie, this was generally only extended to white, gender-conforming women. Internal conflicts regarding women's expectations and inclusions of other races and sexual preferences did arise within the mountaineering community, stemming from broader social norms and prejudices.

Women in both settings were aware of their inferior standing compared to men. They explicitly acknowledged the variety of physical and emotional standards for men and women. Women expressed incredulity at the expectations of them and had to prove themselves both capable of climbing the same mountains and navigating the same political arenas as men. Though women did prove themselves capable, their statements were ignored or discounted by some men; others recognized women's capabilities with various degrees of support. Men who witnessed women's physical and political actions shared their astonished accounts of women's abilities to participate in both male-dominated spheres. The male family members of female

mountaineers played an important role in encouraging and enabling their participation in outdoor recreation, and these partnerships within families and between various political causes gave women additional power and allies to promote their status and enact legal change.

Ultimately, though these movements shared uniquely female challenges and strategies, they resulted in different positions for women. Women achieved suffrage in the Pacific Northwest preceding national suffrage in 1920 and held elected offices by World War II. However, women continued to struggle for equality in the backcountry. Many men did support early female participants, but the increasing popularization and professionalization of the sport prohibited women from attaining the visible leadership positions of their front country counterparts.<sup>68</sup> Notably, evolving equipment did not consider female mountaineers. The most cutting-edge equipment was designed by the United State military or was developed in Europe where the climbing industry continued to be male-dominated; therefore, all of the new equipment was tailored to male climbers, effectively sidelining women from safer, more technical climbs.<sup>69</sup> Therefore, by World War II, women had gained social capital in the front country but continued to fight for equal status in the mountains.

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68. Isserman, 222-268.

69. Isserman, 272; Rachel da Silva, Jill Lawrenz, Wendy Roberts, "A Brief History of Women Climbing in the Coast and Cascade Ranges," in *Leading Out: Women Climbers Reaching for the Top*, ed. Rachel da Silva (Seattle, Washington: Seal Press, 1992), 101.

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