Oregon Historical Society Commemorates Centennial of the 19th Amendment with New Exhibit, *Nevertheless, They Persisted*

*On exhibit March 14 – November 8, 2020*

Portland, OR – March 9, 2020 – Oregon’s first constitution, from the late 1850s, banned slavery but also made it illegal for free African Americans to live in the state. Not long after, in 1872, Mary Beatty, an African American Oregonian, joined Abigail Scott Duniway, Maria Hendee, and Mrs. M.A. Lambert in their attempt to vote. Along with activists across the country (including Susan B. Anthony), these four women brought attention to the campaign for women’s voting rights — known as “woman suffrage.”

Almost one hundred fifty years after this historic moment, the Oregon Historical Society commemorates this complicated history and the brave activists who fought for woman suffrage in an original exhibition, *Nevertheless, They Persisted: Women’s Voting Rights and the 19th Amendment*. On view March 14 through November 8, this exhibit shows the many ways Oregon history connects to the national history of woman suffrage and to the complex history of American democracy.

“In this election year, *Nevertheless, They Persisted* will prompt visitors to reflect on the power of the vote and the many ways that activists have fought to universalize this basic right of citizenship,” said OHS Executive Director Kerry Tymchuk.
Oregon women gained the right to vote in 1912, the initiative passing with a 52% majority after five prior failed attempts spanning nearly 30 years. It was not until the ratification of the 19th Amendment in 1920, however, that women across the country gained the right to vote in local and national elections. Even then, these rights did not extend to all women — Native Americans and Asian Americans were not granted the right to vote until much later.

With over 125 unique artifacts and documents, *Nevertheless, They Persisted* invites visitors to grapple with how and why political leaders have denied women the vote, how women have fought for equal rights, and how teamwork and fights across race, class, and organizing tactics have shaped this history. Through storytelling and interactive experiences, visitors will connect to the past and feel the struggles and triumphs of the women (and men) who demanded the vote and used their rights to shape our nation and our world.

Visitors will experience both sides of the fight for suffrage by viewing 1910s newsreel film footage showing suffrage protests and activities and by listening to anti-suffrage songs from the era. A voting-station interactive component will let visitors place a card into a ballot box to learn who received the right to vote with the passage of the 19th Amendment and who did not.

*Nevertheless, They Persisted: Women’s Voting Rights and the 19th Amendment* will be on exhibit May 14 through November 8, 2020. We welcome classes and other group tours (visit our [website](https://www.ohs.org) for more information). The Oregon Historical Society’s museum is open seven days a week, Monday – Saturday from 10am – 5pm and Sunday from 12pm – 5pm. Admission is $10, with discounts for students, seniors, teachers, and youth. Admission is free every day for OHS members and Multnomah County residents.

**About the Oregon Historical Society**

For more than a century, the Oregon Historical Society has served as the state’s collective memory, preserving a vast collection of artifacts, photographs, maps, manuscript materials, books, films, and oral histories. Our research library, museum, digital platforms & website ([ohs.org](https://www.ohs.org)), educational programming, and historical journal make Oregon’s history open and accessible to all. We exist because history is powerful, and because a history as deep and rich as Oregon’s cannot be contained within a single story or point of view.