

Martha McClellan Brown

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<https://womensuffragemovementindayton.files.wordpress.com/2015/04/martha-mcclellan-brown.jpg>

Lifetime Activist and Suffragette

Martha McClellan Brown got involved in the Women's Suffrage Movement through her work with other social-political movements such as the Temperance and Anti-slavery Movements, interests that she shared with her husband. While serving in the leadership of these other groups she and her husband both tried valiantly to get women's suffrage added to the groups' platforms without much success. These failures along with their racial policies led her to leave those groups and focus more on the women's suffrage groups and clubs in the Cincinnati area. She attended lectures on the topic and also spoke at some meetings too. There were leaflets advertising lectures in her collection, along with a copy of her booklet *The Accident of Sex*. It was noted, "that the booklet was presented before the National Woman Suffrage Association in Tremont Temple, Boston, Mass. on May 27, 1881" (MS-147 Finding Aid). She also participated in marches at the local, state and national levels. Within her collection, correspondence indicated that she attended marches in Cleveland, Ohio and in Washington D. C. It is likely that she also attended the first

Woman's Suffrage Parade in Dayton, Ohio on October 24, 1914. Her correspondence also indicated that she donated money to the cause and worked to raise money for it as well. Her suffrage activities were not just in the Dayton area. She moved around quite a bit due to her husband's career as a minister and her involvement in the Temperance Movement. She also lived and worked on the Suffrage Movement in Cincinnati, Ohio and in New York City, New York (MS-147 Finding Aid).



Life of an Activist

Early Life

Martha "Mattie" McClellan Brown was career social and political activist and the oldest of the seven Dayton suffragists. She was born on April 6, 1838 in Baltimore, Maryland, to David and Jane Haight McClellan. The family moved two years later to Cambridge, Ohio. Tragically, she lost both of her parents by the age of eight. Brown and her sister would be taken in and raised by a large family in their neighborhood.

At the age of twenty, she married Methodist Episcopal minister Rev. William Kennedy Brown. She and her husband shared interests in reform issues including the Temperance, Anti-Slavery and Women's Suffrage Movements. In 1860 Mattie enrolled in the Pittsburgh Female College with her husband's full support, graduating in 1862 at the top of her class. This was a unique situation because not many married women were able to attend college; it also demonstrates the support her husband gave to her pursuit of an education. They went on to have six children over the course of their marriage including: Orvon Graff, Westanna (Wessie), Charne, Richard McClellan, Marie, and Kleon Thaw, born between 1863 and 1886 (MS-147 Finding Aid).

Education and a Career in Activism

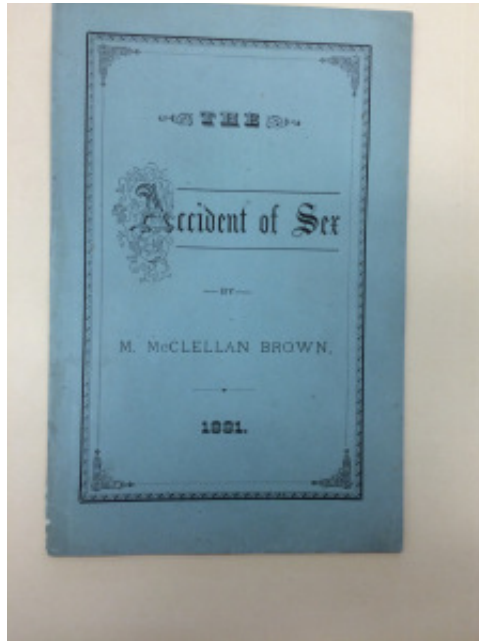
Being a mother of six did not halt her activism; in fact, at times she was away for long periods pursuing these causes while her husband cared for the children along with performing his ministerial duties. She spent most of a five-year period living in New York so that she could serve in the unpaid position as the Secretary of the National Prohibition Alliance while her family was in Pittsburgh (MS-147 Finding Aid). She held multiple leadership positions in organizations involved in the Temperance Movement such as the Independent Order of Good Templars (I.O.G.T.); the Women's Christian Temperance Union (W.C.T.U.); the Prohibition Party (she was named vice president of the party, as well as a member of the platform committee; she and her husband were largely responsible for adding the women's suffrage cause to the Prohibition Party platform); she was also involved in the Women's Suffrage and Women's Club Movements. There were archival materials relating to her involvement in both movements such as programs and directories (MS-147 Finding Aid).

A New Career

In the early 1880's, Brown began to pursue her interests in the academic world. Her husband would become president of the Cincinnati Wesleyan Women's College in 1882, and she served the university by becoming vice-president as well as a professor of art, literature and philosophy. Her son Orvan would also become employed at the university as a science teacher. Reverend Brown also worked in various Methodist congregations in Cincinnati, Ohio. Following her work at the university, Brown became involved in Cincinnati philanthropic and civic affairs, and continued her work in the Woman Suffrage Movement and the Women's Club Movement.

Career Activist Dies

She continued to lecture and author articles on temperance and other topics. She would briefly resume her activity with the Good Templars in 1911, making a final lecture tour on their behalf, reinforcing their message to their English counterparts. Following the death of her husband in 1915, she returned to live with her son Kleon Thaw Brown until her death in 1916 at the age of seventy-eight. (Martha McClellan Brown Papers, MS-147).



<https://womenssuffragemovementindayton.files.wordpress.com/2015/04/accident-of-sex-martha-mcclellan-brown.jpg>

Photo 1 Citation: Martha McClellan Brown, c. 1910-16 (WSU Special Collections and Archives).

Photo 2 Citation: O.W.S.A. Welcome Ribbon, appears to be hand painted, n.d. (WSU Special Collections and Archives).

Photo 3 Citation: Martha McClellan Brown's "Accident of Sex: A Lecture Delivered Before the National Woman Suffrage Association, in Tremont Temple, Boston, Mass., May 27th, 1881" (WSU Special Collections and Archives).

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