



BELVA A LOCKWOOD

PLATFORM
OF THE
NATIONAL EQUAL RIGHTS PARTY.

FROM THE BAG

If women in the states are not permitted to vote,
there is no law against their being voted for.

Belva A. Lockwood



HOW I RAN FOR THE PRESIDENCY

Belva A. Lockwood

As we have said before, Belva Lockwood merits the attention of our readers, and of posterity generally.¹ This year seems like a good time to offer another Lockwood memoir,² this one dealing with her first campaign to be President of the United States. It was first printed in the March 1903 issue of *The National Magazine*, and is preceded by a short introduction by the editors of that magazine.

— *The Editors*

Mrs. Belva A. Lockwood, who still practices law in Washington and is a familiar figure in committee rooms in the national capitol, has the unique distinction of being the only woman who ever “made the run” for the presidency of the United States. The nomination, made at a convention of California women, was unsought by Mrs. Lockwood, but, like the greatness of some, was thrust upon her, and she led the way to the polling of several thousand votes and to the astonishing of the country. The campaign made by the advocates of women’s rights under the leadership of Mrs. Lockwood forms an interesting and significant chapter in the political history of the country, and is here written for the first time by the woman who essayed to sit in the

Belva Lockwood (1830-1917) was an accomplished lawyer, writer, and educator, among other things. See Jill Norgren, Belva Lockwood: The Woman Who Would Be President (2007).

¹ See, e.g., *Belva Lockwood in Washington*, 21 Green Bag 2d 183 (2018).

² A few years ago we published her recollections of launching a legal career in the late 19th century. See *My Efforts to Become a Lawyer*, 19 Green Bag 2d 413 (2016).

chair of the chief magistrate of the land. Since that time her cause has gained prodigiously. In several Western states and in Australia women have gained full franchise rights – and they are making progress everywhere.

HOW I RAN FOR THE PRESIDENCY

By Belva A. Lockwood

It was in the regular course of presidential elections in 1884 that I received the nomination to the office. The national conventions had been assembled, and had made their nominations early. James G. Blaine, then in the zenith of his popularity and one of the leading statesmen of the nation, had been nominated by the republican party, and Grover Cleveland, then a new possibility, and comparatively unknown, was nominated by the democratic party; John P. St. John headed the ticket for the prohibitionists, and Benjamin F. Butler was nominated in Michigan by the laboring men's party, and his nomination had been made by a woman.

Progressive and thinking women from all parties had attended in greater or less numbers all of these conventions, and were pressing forward for recognition. About this time Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Mrs. Susan B. Anthony came out in a circular, directed to the leading women of the country, urging them to use their influence for the republican party; a copy of it was sent to me. I had been present, as had also Miss Phoebe Cousins and others, at the convention in Chicago which had nominated Mr. Blaine, and we had besought the resolutions committee in vain to adopt a plank in their platform giving some recognition to women.

The circular of these distinguished ladies appeared to me to be so out of harmony with real conditions, that I at once made the following reply and sent it to Mrs. Marietta L.B. Stow of San Francisco, who was then editing the *Woman's Herald of Industry*, and which she published in her paper as follows:

Washington, D.C., Aug. 10, 1884.

Editor *Woman's Herald of Industry*:

The August number of your valuable paper is before me. It has so much the true ring of justice and right in it, without fear or favor, that I am sure it must do good wherever it goes.

Why not nominate women for important places? Is not Victoria Empress of India? Have we not among our country-women per-

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sons of as much talent and ability? Is not history full of precedents of women rulers? The appointment of Phoebe Cousins as assistant marshal of St. Louis is a step in the right direction. It is in keeping with her education and profession, is suitable, legal work, and will have a softening and refining influence on the criminal classes of the city of St. Louis, and the attaches of the court. There should be more appointments of the same sort.

If women in the states are not permitted to vote, there is no law against their being voted for, and if elected, filling the highest office in the gift of the people.

Two of the present political parties who have candidates in the field believe in woman suffrage. It would have been well had some of the candidates been women. There is no use in attempting to avoid the inevitable.

The Republican party, claiming to be the party of progress, has little else but insult for women, when they appear before its "conventions" and ask for recognition. Note, for instance, the resolution on woman suffrage presented to their convention on the 5th of June.

It is quite time that we had our own party; our own platform, and our own nominees.

We shall never have equal rights until we take them, nor respect until we command it. Act up to your convictions of justice and right, and you cannot go far wrong.

Yours truly, Belva A. Lockwood.

Mrs. Stow made some extensive and liberal comments of her own on this letter in printing it, and then sent it in turn to the leading women of the country, and approving and disgruntled comments appeared in turn. Mrs. Helen M. Gougar of Lafayette, Ind., then publishing *Our Herald*, favored the nomination.

I had now been ten years in the practice of law before the supreme court of the District of Columbia, and four years before the United States supreme court [and court] of claims, all of which courts I had opened to women by hand to hand work and dogged persistence, in the last two instances drafting the bill and lobbying it through congress in 1879.

I had also secured the passage of an act in 1872, giving to the women employes of the government equal pay with men for equal work; had secured the passage of an act appropriating \$50,000 for the payments of

bounties to sailors and marines; had secured the appointment of a matron in the district jail, and a sitting room and retiring room for women witnesses and women lawyers in the court house. My hands were full of legal work, often two or three cases a day, and my patronage, for a woman, was really marvelous. But I stopped at nothing, took hold of any class of case, from a common assault to a murder; had plenty of civil cases, giving no more thought to the nominations, when suddenly, like a clap of thunder from a clear sky, came a nomination to me for the presidency from the women of California.

Fired by the situation, and believing that I had some grit, the women had called a convention and had nominated me for the presidency, with Marietta L.B. Stow as a running mate. I was taken utterly by surprise, was too busy in my profession to stop, and for three days carried the letter of nomination in my pocket before mentioning it to any one. On the Monday morning following, with the answer in my pocket, I went up to the supreme court of the district, where I had two civil cases to file, and three in the court of claims, with a claim to look after in the war department, when Mr. M.A. Clancy, assistant clerk of the District of Columbia Court, then as now, who was filing my papers, said:

“Mrs. Lockwood, you ought to vote for Ben Butler.”

“Why?” I asked.

“Because he is a woman suffragist, a temperance man, and a labor reformer.”

Clancy had formerly been private secretary to Butler in congress. I looked at him half in doubt as to whether I should give the matter away, and then, pulling the letter out of my pocket, and warning him not to mention it, replied:

“Clancy, I’ve got a nomination myself.”

He glanced at the letter, and burst out laughing, saying: “That’s the best joke of the season.”

I again warned him not to mention it, and especially not to tell the court reporter, and sped away on my wheel to the post-office to mail my answer to the California women, and thence to the court of claims and the war department.

I append below the letter and the response.

How I Ran for the Presidency

San Francisco, Sept. 13–84.
331 Montgomery St.

Belva A. Lockwood.

Madam: We, the undersigned, have the honor to congratulate you as the first woman ever nominated for the highest office in the gift of a nation, and we further congratulate you upon the cordial manner in which the nomination has been received by both people and press.

Clara S. Foltz
Mary J. Holt
Elizabeth J. Corbett, M.D.
Marietta L. Stow

Washington, D.C., Sept. 25–84.
610 F St., N.W.

Clara S. Foltz
Mary J. Holt
Elizabeth J. Corbett, M.D.
Marietta L. Stow

Mesdames: Your letter of congratulation reached me in due time and I am proud to have such a coterie of able women at my beck.

Now, without stopping to look back, let us see what a few earnest, capable women can do.

Do not fail to have a state convention called in California, an electoral ticket in the field and some talented woman or man nominated on the “Equal-Rights” ticket in each congressional district. Then work bravely for the election. If we can get one elector elected on our ticket so that that person will form one of the electoral college that meets here in December, this campaign of our Equal Rights party will pass into the history of 1884, and become the entering wedge – the first practical movement in the history of Woman Suffrage, and will be the beginning of the end. It will open a door to be shut no more forever, and four years from now will sweep the country.

Already every newspaper in the land has caught up the refrain and all over the country earnest men and women are saying, Why not? With my best wishes to you ladies I remain,

Yours truly,
Belva A. Lockwood.

Belva A. Lockwood

In the meantime I had formulated a platform, thinking that we must take up every one of the current issues of the day, and at the same time make it so brief that the newspapers would publish it and the people read it.

I had hardly returned to my office when the Evening Critic had sent up a reporter, who said:

“Mrs. Lockwood, I hear you have a nomination for the presidency. The Critic wants a copy of it and the reply.”

A young woman typewriter in my office, Miss Lillie Sadler, thereupon typed him a copy from the rough notes on my desk, and he had hardly closed the door behind him, when another reporter appeared, and said:

“Mrs. Lockwood, we hear you have a nomination for the presidency and have accepted it. The Evening Star must have a copy, of course.”

Again the typewriter’s fingers flew over the keys, and he was supplied with a copy, and I had turned again to my work when the office door again opened and in came an Associated Press reporter, with his face all aglow, and repeated:

“Mrs. Lockwood, we hear you have a nomination. The public must have it, of course.”

The evening had now come on, and I had gone to a concert, when in came a reporter for the National Republican, the only morning paper then in Washington. Again the typewriter supplied the want, giving this time a copy of the platform which I had instructed her to copy, and which I append below:

PLATFORM OF THE
NATIONAL EQUAL RIGHTS PARTY

1. We pledge ourselves, if elected to power, so far as in us lies, to do equal and exact justice to every class of our citizens, without distinction of color, sex, or nationality.

2. We shall recommend that the laws of the several states be so amended that women will be recognized as voters, and their property rights made equal with that of the male population, to the end that they may become self-supporting, rather than a dependent class.

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3. It will be our earnest endeavor to revive the now lagging industries of the country by encouraging and strengthening our commercial relations with other countries, especially with the Central and South American States, whose wealth of productions are now largely diverted to England and other European countries for lack of well established steamship lines, and railroad communications between these countries and our own, encourage exports by an effort to create a demand for our home productions; and to this end, we deem that a moderate tariff – sufficient to protect the laboring classes, but not so high as to keep our goods out of the market, as most likely to conserve the best interests of our whole people. That is to say, we shall avoid as much as possible a high protective tariff on the one hand and free trade on the other. We shall also endeavor by all laudable means to increase the wages of laboring men and women. Our protective system will be most earnestly exerted to protect the commonwealth of the country from venality and corruption in high places.

4. It will be our earnest effort to see that the solemn contract made with the soldiers of the country on enlistment into the United States service, viz: that if disabled therein they should be pensioned, strictly carried out, and that without unnecessary expense and delay to them; and a re-enactment of the “Arrears Act.”

5. We shall discountenance by every legal means the liquor traffic, because its tendency is to demoralize the youth of the land; to lower the standard of morality among the people; and we do not believe that the revenue derived from it would feed and clothe the paupers that it makes, and the money expended on its account in courts, workhouses and prisons.

6. We believe that the only solution of the Indian question is, to break up all of their small principalities and chieftainships, that have ever presented the anomaly of small kingdoms scattered through a republic and ever liable to break out in some unexpected locality; and which have been hitherto maintained at such great expense to the government; and treat the Indian like a rational human being, as we have the negro – make him a citizen, amenable to the laws, and let him manage his own private affairs.

7. That it is but just that every protection granted to citizens of the United States by birth should also be secured to the citizens of the United States by adoption.

8. We shall continue gradually to pay the public debt and to refund the balance, but not in such manner as to curtail the circulating medium of the country so as to embarrass trade, but pledge ourselves that every dollar shall be paid in good time.

9. We oppose monopoly, the tendency of which is to make the rich, richer, and the poor, poorer, as opposed to the genius and welfare of republican institutions.

10. We shall endeavor to aid in every laudable way the work of educating the masses of the people, not only in book knowledge, but in physical, moral and social culture, in such a manner as will tend to elevate the standard of American manhood and womanhood – that the individual may receive the highest possible development.

11. We recommend a uniform system of laws for the several States as desirable, as far as practicable; and especially the laws relating to the descent of property, marriage and divorce, and the limitation of contracts.

12. We will endeavor to maintain the peaceable relations which now exist between the various sections of our vast country, and strive to enter into a compact of peace with the other American as well as European nations, in order that the peace which we now enjoy may become perpetual. We believe that war is a relic of barbarism belonging to the past, and should only be resorted to in the direst extremity.

13. That the dangers of a solid South or a solid North shall be averted by a strict regard to the interests of every section of the country, a fair distribution of public offices, and such a distribution of the public funds for the increase of the facilities of inter-commercial relations as will restore the South to her former industrial prestige, develop the exhaustless resources of the West, foster the iron, coal and woolen interests of the Middle States, and revive the manufactures of the East.

14. We shall foster civil service, believing that a true civil service reform, honestly and candidly administered will lift us out of the imputation of having become a nation of office-seekers, and have a tendency to develop in candidates for office an earnest desire to make themselves worthy and capable of performing the duties of the office that they desire to fill, and in order to make the reform a permanent one, recommend that it be ingrafted into the constitution of the United States.

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15 It will be the policy of the Equal Rights Party to see that the residue of the public domain is parceled out to actual settlers only, that the honest yeomanry of the land, and especially those who have fought to preserve it, shall enjoy its benefits.

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The secret was out and next morning I was famous. The letter of acceptance and the platform was not only copied in all the large dailies but in every country newspaper of any standing in the United States. The campaign having been uncorked, it seemed disposed to run itself. It was in vain that Mrs. Stanton and Miss Anthony and Lillie Devereaux Blake rose up and published in the newspapers that they had not made the nomination and, therefore, that it was not regular. Mrs. Abigail Scott Duniway published in her paper, the *New Northwest*, something akin to vituperation, and Mrs. Stow replied in her paper. My daughter, Mrs. Ormes, replied to Mrs. Blake in the *New York World*, and matters looked a little squally, but there was no chance for any back step.

Then the women of Washington became aroused, and determined on a ratification meeting, but no one in Washington has a vote. An electoral ticket was therefore gotten up for Maryland, and Mrs. Amanda Best, who at that time had a country home within the confines of Prince George county, and near to the railroad station, offered to act as hostess.

Notices of the meeting and how to get there were published in the Washington papers and billed in the streets. On arriving we found a rambling old farmhouse, which was used as a dressing-room for the occasion. Huge, spreading old apple trees in the background were used for reception rooms and to shade the long tables of lemonade, sandwiches, pies and cake that had been spread under them. In the foreground on a pole was a large white streamer containing the names and portraits of the candidates, joined with the stars and stripes, a rough board platform and board seats in front; while the bright women of Washington and the sturdy old farmers of Maryland, who were almost amazed at the audacity of women holding a political convention, made the welkin ring.

There was a lively speech from the presidential candidate, in which she counselled the women to rise up, and by their votes take possession of the affairs of the gover[n]ment. There was a response from Maryland and from

the District of Columbia, with a marked appreciation of the repast spread under the apple trees a little later, and as the sun went down the merry ratifiers hied themselves to the railroad station to take the train back to Washington. There, sitting on the railroad ties, with note books in hand, were nine reporters from Baltimore and Washington striving in the twilight to make an abstract of the candidate's speech for their respective papers before the cars came rushing down. What they did not remember they unconcernedly made up, never losing chance of an opportunity to add a little color. The scene was both laughable and serious. Of course, both Baltimore and Washington had the report of the meeting next morning, with embellishments.

Electoral tickets were then nominated in all of the states where there was any known organization that favored the movement. Mrs. Stow's paper was converted into a lively campaign sheet and sent out broadcast. Messrs. Vose & Co. of New York City published portraits of the candidates in all sizes at their own expense, and circulated them widely. Cleveland (Ohio) got up a Lockwood button. Mrs. Marilla M. Ricker of Dover, New Hampshire, headed the electoral ticket in that state, Clara Foltz in California, Amanda M. Best in Maryland, Cynthia Leonard in New York, Lelia B. Robinson in Oregon, and two very bright women in Michigan and in Indiana.

A lively and amusing feature of the campaign was the Mother Hubbard clubs, composed mostly of young men dressed in women's clothes, who made speeches and sang songs, one of them always representing the candidate, and which the newspapers published as an actual verity. The most noted of these was the club at Rahway, New Jersey, which was pictured at large in Frank Leslie's, the Broom Brigade of New York City, illustrated in the World, and the Mother Hubbard Club at Terra Haute, Indiana, which actually did some creditable work.

The results of the campaign were summarized in this following petition:

To the Honorable, the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States:

Your petit[i]oner, a resident of the District of Columbia, claiming the inalienable rights and prerogatives of an American citizen, conspicuous among which is the time honored right of petition, most respectfully states:

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That at and during the recent election for President, held in the United States, your petitioner was one of the nominees for that responsible and honorable trust. That in the States of New Hampshire, New York, Michigan, Illinois, Maryland and California, the party whose nominee your petitioner was, fully and in all respects complied with the laws, in placing their electoral tickets in the field. Your petitioner begs leave to set forth, that, in all of the afore mentioned states, the electoral tickets, having at their head "For President, Belva A. Lockwood; For Vice President, Marietta L. Stow," *did* receive the suffrage and support of good citizens, as follows:

New Hampshire	379	votes
New York	1336	"
Michigan	374	"
Illinois	1008	"
Maryland	318	"
California	734	"

and the entire electoral vote of Indiana.

Your petitioner further states that during the recent session of the Electoral College of the State of Indiana, at the capitol thereof, that after it had cast its vote for Cleveland it changed its mind, as it had an undisputed legal right to do, and cast its united vote for your petitioner. Your petitioner therefore demands that the vote of Indiana be counted for her in compliance with the expressed wish of the electors of said State. And thus your petitioner will ever pray.

Mrs. Stow received this notification of the presentation of the petition:

Wash. D.C. Jan. 12, 1884.

Dear Mrs. Stow – The above is a facsimile of a petition introduced into the senate to-day by Sen. Hoar and referred to the committee on privileges and elections.

BELVA A. LOCKWOOD.

Besides the votes named in the above petition, we received one-half of the electoral vote of Oregon, and a large vote in Pennsylvania, but the votes in the latter state were not counted, simply dumped into the waste basket as false votes.

Thus ended a presidential campaign that has gone down in history, but which awakened the women of the country as nothing else has done since that time.