



# **Splintered Sisterhood: Gender and Class in the Campaign against Woman Suffrage**

*Susan E. Marshall*

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When Tennessee became the 36th and final state needed to ratify the Nineteenth Amendment in August 1920, giving women the right to vote, one group of women expressed bitter disappointment and vowed to fight against "this feminist disease". Why this fierce and extended opposition? In "Splintered Sisterhood", Susan Marshall argues that the women of the antisuffrage movement mobilized not as threatened homemakers, but as influential political strategists. Drawing on surviving records of major antisuffrage organizations, Marshall makes clear that antisuffrage women organized to protect gendered class interests. She shows that many of the most vocal antisuffragists were wealthy, educated women who exercised considerable political influence through their personal ties to men in politics as well as by their own positions as leaders of social service committees. Under the guise of defending an ideal of "true womanhood", these powerful women sought to keep the vote from lower-class women, fearing it would result in an increase in the "ignorant vote" and in their own displacement from positions of influence. This book reveals the increasingly militant style of antisuffrage protest as the conflict over female voting rights escalated. "Splintered Sisterhood" adds a missing piece to the history of women's rights activism in the United States and illuminates current issues of antifeminism.

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