

November is New York State History Month. The State Education Department honors the rich history of our great state and celebrates the valuable education resources of our museums, libraries, archives and historic sites. In commemoration of the 101st anniversary of women's suffrage in New York State, the New York State Museum is displaying a model of a statue honoring Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony in 2020 in New York's Central Park. It is the first statue in the park in honor of a woman.

In tribute to NYS History month and the 101st anniversary of women suffragists, the Leo P. Ostebo Kings Park Heritage Museum would like to recognize Kings Park's Suffragist Elizabeth Freeman, 1876-1942. Freeman her spent younger years growing up at St. Johnland in Kings Park. She came from England along with her mother, Mary Hall Freeman, her brother, Printer's Union Leader, John Freeman and her sister, renowned artist, Jane Freeman.



EF in Salvation Army uniform, as a teenager



Saint Johnland Map

Elizabeth had returned to England, 1905 with her mom, supporting themselves by making silk ribbon flowers for nobility. She had come across a woman being mistreated and when she came to her aid she found herself thrown in jail alongside the woman. It was at that time she learned of the women's rights movement and why this woman was thrown in jail.

In her diary writings, published by grandniece Margret Johnson in *An Interactive Scrapbook of Elisabeth Freeman: Suffragette, Civil Rights Worker, and Militant Pacifist*,

www.elizabethfreeman.org, "Elisabeth found a cause that so uplifted her and saved her from the tedium of daily life that she likened it to spirituality: "“But the supreme spirit of the militant movement is one that, I say reverently, is not of this world. In the great battle of Downing Street, as I looked down the line of marching women I saw that their faces were turned to heaven, and there was that expression which awed and uplifted me. It was as though the early Crusaders had been reincarnated in them. I felt that I was watching the advance of a mighty Christian army. ””



Woman's Coronation illustrates the elaborate pageantry, using symbolization and drama to make the point that women deserved their place

When Elizabeth returned to the USA, she began her journey alongside many thousands of women, to earn the right to vote. To Elisabeth, who had gone to jail for the Cause, street speaking, selling suffrage newspapers, attracting the attention of reporters and photographers were child's play. She was represented by Wm. Feakins Speaker's Bureau and also worked with many of the suffrage organizations of the day, including the NYS Woman's Suffrage Assn., the Women's Political Union, the National Woman's Suffrage Assn., The Woman's Journal, the Texas Woman's Suffrage Assn., and the Congressional Union, as written by Margret Johnson. (www.elizabethfreeman.org)



English Notices

On Monday, September 9th, the members of the London Women's Committee met at Miss Clarke's, on the Bourne Estate to make a small presentation to Miss Freeman, who has accepted a post as organizer of an American Women's Suffrage organization. . . . Miss Freeman's parting words will not be forgotten. They will inspire us in the great work of reforming the conditions of women shop assistants. We are glad, one and all, to have met her, and to have gained from her the inspiration and enthusiasm which has been the making of the movement. Miss Freeman leaves England loaded with good wishes from a host of admirers, amongst whom may be numbered the members of the section, who wish her good luck, glorious success and happiness in the splendid work for the uplifting of woman, in which she will be engaged on the other side of the water, work for which she is undoubtedly eminently fitted.

—*The Shop Assistant.*

The audience were deeply moved by her earnest championship of the wronged and oppressed.

—*Wimbledon Mail.*


Miss Freeman made a highly interesting speech, pointing out the peculiar position in which women often found themselves owing to entirely man-made laws.

—*Hendon Daily Post.*

Miss Freeman was received with applause.

—*Richmond (England) Daily News.*

ELIZABETH FREEMAN



LECTURER ON WOMAN SUFFRAGE

DIRECTION OF WILLIAM B. PEAKINS
(Successor to Civic Forum Lecture Bureau)
21 WEST 44TH STREET, NEW YORK
TELEPHONE, GRANT 8317

Elizabeth traveled extensively through state such as NYS, Ohio and Texas by means of horse drawn wagon willed with literature with other women, such as “General” Rosalie Gardiner Jones of Cold Spring Harbor, ancestor of Lion Gardiner of Gardiner’s Island, lobbying for the Cause of suffrage, the right to vote in political elections.



To save money and because of the rural nature of their journey Freeman and Jones often slept in their wagon and ate picnic style



Photo of Rosalie Jones and Elisabeth Freeman in Ohio 1913

Through her years, Elizabeth was engaged in many additional important life changing causes. The NAACP campaign brought her expertise to these social problems and she became an investigator and speaker. “By the end of 1916 with her participation in the NAACP anti-lynching campaign and the Hughes Women’s Special, Elisabeth

Freeman had established herself as a national player. She was a contender for the position of national organizer for the NAACP.” (www.elizabethfreeman.org)



Anti-Lynching: poster for speaking tour on behalf of NAACP anti-lynching campaign, 1916



EF pictured with black community in Danville IL

By 1917, Elizabeth Freeman was standing up for civil liberties during war time, she would become a lobbyist for the Emergency Peace Foundation that later became People’s Council of America and do extensive organizing and speaking. Her continuous radical fight for civil equality would shine a light on political and oppressive matters that would shape our country.



Newspaper photo of EF and Upton Sinclair

Elisabeth Freeman retired to Altadena, California and promptly joined the local chapter of the National Woman’s Party, still led by suffragist Alice Paul, with continuous dedicated to passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). From her correspondence to her nieces we know that she continued her strong belief in peace and labor issues. She died of pleurisy on Feb. 27th, 1942.

In the publication Equal Rights of the National Woman's Party, they wrote of her life:

Soap-box orator, banner bearer, colorful organizer, always the hardest work fell to her lot and was conquered by her enthusiasm...Her contribution to the cause of women never faltered.

(www.elizabethfreeman.org)

For this information and more the Leo P. Ostebo Kings Park Heritage Museum recommends and encourages those interested to go online to www.elizabethfreeman.org for more detailed information.

Article written in collaboration – Peg Johnston, great, grandniece of Elizabeth Freeman and Joann Galletta Hahn, Board of Trustees President of the Leo P. Ostebo Kings Park Heritage Museum