

## WOMEN IN POPULISM, 1888-1892

by Lawrence E. Roberts

On a spring morning in 1890, four thousand Kansas farmers, some of whom had driven their teams as far as forty miles, gathered in a grove of trees near Olathe, Kansas, to hear a speech by Populist orator Mary Elizabeth Lease. The crowd cheered her on as she attacked the railroads, Wall Street Bankers, and government land policy.<sup>1</sup> In the summer of 1890, Lease repeated the Olathe scene several times in many different Kansas towns. In various states of the West and South, as Populism took hold in that political season, women were an important part of the uprising. They saw an opportunity to participate in the debate on the important economic and social issues of the period, and participate they did. Through writing, speaking, and publishing they played a significant part in the development and articulation of the political philosophy that resulted in the creation of the People's (Populist) Party.

Populism grew out of the farmers' alliances created after the Civil War to meet a depression in agriculture. Poor crops and a world surplus of commodities compounded the farmers' economic problems. Convinced of the need for a change in governmental policy many farmers supported the short-lived Greenback-Labor party in 1880. The Greenback appeal called for a substantial increase in the amount of paper money which had been virtually eliminated in favor of gold after the Civil War. But a lack of support for the new organization prompted farmers, primarily in the South and West, to desert direct political action and seek united economic action.

This decision found expression in the

creation of farmers' alliances. These alliances represented the farmers' response to the economic and social conditions of the period, when nearly eighty percent of all Americans lived in a rural setting and over forty percent of the nation's labor force engaged in agriculture as a livelihood.<sup>2</sup> Increasingly large numbers of the farm population found that the economic conditions of the day worked against them. A shortage of circulating currency and its correlate, high interest rates, attracted particular attention. The alliances had two main goals: to disseminate agricultural information pertaining to new seeds, fertilizers, and farming techniques; and second, to combine resources to purchase farm implements and supplies, in bulk, at wholesale prices. This, they argued, would reduce the cost to the individual farmer. In addition, by pooling their crops and selling directly to manufacturers, wholesalers, and retailers they hoped to realize a greater net profit.

Initially the alliances rejected the idea of entering politics. In 1889, S.B. Alexander, President of the State Alliance of North Carolina, declared that the Farmers' Alliance would refrain from political activity.<sup>3</sup> The *National Economist*, official newspaper of the National Farmers' Alliance and Industrial Union (N.F.A. & I.U.), echoed this sentiment declaring in an editorial, "a third political party will not be formed by these organizations."<sup>4</sup> Co-operative efforts of self-help, however, met defeat when farmers found bankers refusing to extend credit to alliance stores, and manufacturers and merchants unwilling to sell directly to

alliance purchasing agents. Faced with these problems, the alliance members gradually turned to political action to accomplish their goals. In May 1891, their activity culminated in the official creation of the People's Party on the national level.

In various states women played an important role in the shift to political activity. Although one-fourth of the alliance membership reportedly were women, they did not consider the organization a woman's movement.<sup>5</sup> Women were a major factor in the work force of the 1880s, but their political rights on the state and national level verged on nonexistence. The 1880 census identified 7,670,000 Americans as earning a livelihood from agriculture. Women accounted for almost 600,000 of that number, and 35,000 listed themselves as farmers and planters.<sup>6</sup> Many of these women engaged in political activity and enjoyed a high level of participation in both Alliance and Populist programs.

From the outset the alliances admitted women members. Any white citizen over sixteen years of age, of good moral character, and who believed in a Supreme Being, could join the organization. Both men and women received the same secret words and ritual associated with membership.<sup>7</sup> While some female members initially were hesitant to speak out publicly, their self-doubt quickly faded. The ranks included such women as Evangeline Usher, correspondent for the *Progressive Farmer* of Raleigh, North Carolina, who declared in a September 1889 article: "I feel like I must intrude again and as I am quite independent of all disfavor, I do not care whether you like the intrusion or not."<sup>8</sup> Bettie Gay of Texas, with the death of her husband in 1880, inherited a farm to run, a mortgage to pay off, and a child to raise.<sup>9</sup> Yet, she still found time to work on behalf of the Alliance. Sophia Harden of South Dakota also ran a farm and participated in the

Alliance. A contemporary described her farm and stock as well kept and closed by saying that "she ploughed a man's stint and then drove eight miles to deliver a lecture on the capabilities of woman." In addition, Sophia Harden served as secretary of the South Dakota State Farmers' Alliance.<sup>10</sup>

Women such as Usher, Gay, Harden and the thousands of other women involved in agriculture saw the Alliance as a means of salvation. "The Alliance has come to redeem woman from her enslaved condition and place her in her proper sphere," Gay wrote, "she is admitted into the organization as the equal of her brother...."<sup>11</sup> Alliances provided women an opportunity to participate in the debates of the day and to help find solutions to the problems confronting the farmers and laborers. Indeed, Captain Darden, a North Carolina State Alliance lecturer, admitted that the most dynamic alliances contained women who regularly attended meetings.<sup>12</sup> But women did much more than attend meetings. Through their speaking, writing, and holding of Alliance offices, they exercised influence at the state and national levels of the organization.

By 1891 a number of women spoke out through Alliance newspapers. Mary Lease edited the *Union Labor Press* in Kansas in 1888, co-founded the *Pueblo Colorado Workman* the next year, and in 1890, became the editor of the *Newton Kansas Commoner*.<sup>13</sup> Annie Diggs served as editor-in-charge of Alliance material in the *Lawrence Journal* (Kansas) in the 1880s, and in 1890 became editor of the *Topeka Advocate*, the official paper of the Kansas State Farmers' Alliance.<sup>14</sup> Anna C. Wait filled the same role on the *Lincoln Beacon* (Nebraska).<sup>15</sup> In 1890, Mrs. Marion Todd edited the *Chicago Express* (Illinois); Elizabeth Wardall assumed the same position on the *Huron Dakota Ruralist*, the house paper of the

South Dakota State Farmers' Alliance.<sup>16</sup> Anna Lindsley and May Garvin owned and edited the *Stafford Alliance Herald* (Kansas).<sup>17</sup>

Newspapers owned and edited by women provided a variety of approaches to the issues of the day. All argued the merits of more circulating currency, public ownership of transportation, and the evils of bankers and absentee landlords. The issues of woman's suffrage and prohibition created less agreement. One of the most outspokenly feminist, alliance papers was Emma Pack's, *Farmer's Wife* (Kansas). Pack's first edition argued, as other women would, that the most pressing domestic issues of concern to women were part of the broader economic and political problems facing the nation. The only way women could seriously affect those issues was by voting for those who made the decisions regarding such questions.<sup>18</sup> By the second issue woman's suffrage dominated the paper's pages. Contributors to the *Farmer's Wife*, including Emma Pack and Fannie McCormick among others, attempted to create a "woman's movement" within the Alliance in 1891, with the organization of the National Women's Alliance (NWA) which they hoped would unite women from the nation's cities and farms into one powerful reform group.<sup>19</sup> The NWA was ultimately unsuccessful in its attempts to create a woman's movement within the Alliance, or to gain support for woman's suffrage or temperance. Pack's paper and dedicated prosuffrage stand illustrated the division that existed within the ranks of women and within the ranks of the Alliance and Populism regarding the questions of woman's suffrage and prohibition.<sup>20</sup> Despite these differences, Pack and the contributors to her paper, were one more example of the active role of women in asking questions and proposing answers to the important political and economic issues facing the nation. Women's involvement

with the press provided a censure-free platform from which they could forcefully argue the merits of the issues most critical to them.

In addition to their prominence in local and state newspapers farm women also contributed to the official national Alliance newspaper the *National Economist*. The editor informed readers "[we do] not reserve a 'tea cup corner' or a 'woman's department' for [our] lady friends. [We] give them a fair field in [our] best columns, and appreciate every word...."<sup>21</sup> Women contributed regularly to the *Economist*. Writing on such subjects as the currency question, tariffs, and land legislation.<sup>22</sup> When the People's Party officially came into being in 1891, Sarah Emery, a long time supporter of the Alliance, became the associate editor of the official party newspaper, the *St. Louis New Forum* (Missouri).<sup>23</sup>

Along with their activities in the press, by 1891 women held a variety of official positions within numerous state alliances. In Kansas and Indiana women were elected vice-president of the state alliances. The alliances in Michigan, South Dakota, and Texas elected women as state secretaries. Illinois, Missouri, Florida, North Carolina, Kansas, Nebraska, and Minnesota all had women as state and county alliance lecturers.<sup>24</sup> Women also accounted for twelve of the ninety-four delegates to the November 17, 1891 meeting of the Supreme Council (the governing body of the N.F.A. & I.U.). Fannie McCormack served as chairwoman of the Kansas delegation at that meeting and women delegates served on several committees and introduced resolutions.<sup>25</sup>

These various activities had considerable impact. The press has always been an important agent in political socialization. Circulation of the *National Economist* alone exceeded 100,000.<sup>26</sup> Leonidas L. Polk, president of the N.F.A. & I.U., stated that the alliances'

newspapers and lecturers served as the primary tool in the education and agitation of the people.<sup>27</sup> It has been argued that Populism's greatest achievement was the political and social education of the nation's citizens.<sup>28</sup> Elizabeth Higgins, reminiscing on the period in her book *Our of the West*, echoed those sentiments. She wrote, "People commenced to think who had never thought before, and people talked who had seldom spoken. They discussed income tax and single tax; they talked of government ownership and the abolition of private property; fiat money and the unity of labor."<sup>29</sup> Reporting on a lecture by Mary Lease the *Kansas Commoner* wrote, "her first speech made so many converts that [they] forthwith engaged [her] to speak in the opera house again last Saturday night."<sup>30</sup> Sarah Emery achieved equally good results with her pen. The chairman of the Union Labor Party, a precursor of the People's Party that had competed in the 1888 elections in Kansas, argued that Emery's book, *Seven Financial Conspiracies*, did more than any other piece of material to inform and arouse the farmers and laborers of Kansas.<sup>31</sup> Out of this ferment came the demands for reform that ultimately found their way into alliance, and finally Populist national platforms. The fact that women both wrote for and helped to run several of the major alliance newspapers, combined with their positions as lecturers and officers within the alliances gave them greater influence than their numbers might suggest.

In the Kansas election of 1890 the efforts of the women bore fruit. That summer, the People's Party officially came into being as a state party. And in their first election in November the organization won a majority of the seats in the lower house of the Kansas legislature. This gave them the right to select a United States senator for the state. A right they exercised in 1891 by replacing Republican

John J. Ingalls, an eighteen year veteran, with William A. Peffer, one of the first People's Party senators to go to Washington. Critics and supporters alike recognized the importance of women in the movement. Victor Murdock, a newspaper reporter of the day, argued that from the outset women led the assault on the old parties.<sup>32</sup>

While many women participated in the 1890 campaign, three women played a key role. Annie Diggs served as co-editor of the *Topeka Advocate*, the official newspaper of the Kansas Farmers' Alliance, in addition to giving many lectures. A contemporary who attended her speeches described her as very small, barely five feet tall, weighing less than 100 pounds, with "a dangerous tongue."<sup>33</sup> The Kansas People's Party asked Diggs to speak at the first grand rally of the campaign.<sup>34</sup> In addition, the party designated her to be their official respondent to the speeches of Republican Senator Ingalls. She gave several speeches in that capacity during the 1890 campaign. Unable to refute Diggs' arguments the opposition press engaged in personal attacks. The *Salina Daily Republican* accused her of being unhappy with her station in life. Diggs perhaps felt God had made a mistake in making her a woman, rather than a man, and she made it her life work to correct the mistake. As a result, she had become a "very masculine woman, rampant, rabid and furious. The wild-eyed Sibyls of the Alliance."<sup>35</sup>

If Annie Diggs had a "dangerous tongue," Mary Elizabeth Lease was even more effective. A dynamic personality, Lease was in more demand than any other Populist speaker in Kansas. In the summer of 1890 she gave over 160 speeches, earning the sobriquet, "The Kansas Pythoess."<sup>36</sup> Friends and foes alike attested to her persuasive lectures. Full of power and energy, she helped "solidify and crystalize" the support of those alliance

members who hesitated to back the People's Party.<sup>37</sup> Lease "could recite the multiplication table and set a crowd hooting or hurraing at her will," wrote reporter and author William Allen White.<sup>38</sup> Tom McNeal, reporter for the opposition *Topeka Capital* (Kansas), echoed those sentiments. Lease was a master at swaying an audience. "If she had suggested that they proceed to hang the nearest banker," McNeal wrote... "the rope would have been furnished."<sup>39</sup> Those brave enough to challenge Lease in debate usually regretted it. J.W. Ayers, a Kansas farmer, attempted to question her, but after the first exchange he was "knocked out and whirling toward the door."<sup>40</sup> F.A. McNeal, a Kansas Republican, simply refused to debate Lease, and characterized her as the greatest orator he had ever heard.<sup>41</sup> Such ability undoubtedly prompted the decision by the Kansas People's Party to ask Lease to address the opening session of the Party's first convention.<sup>42</sup>

The third member of this group, Sarah Emery, made a contribution of equal importance. In 1887 Emery wrote *Seven Financial Conspiracies Which Have Enslaved the American People*, a vehement attack on United States economic policy since the Civil War. Over 100,000 copies were in circulation in 1890. Well-received in the Alliance press, the book was widely read and quoted by Populist speakers.<sup>43</sup> Alliance newspapers considered Emery's work their strongest weapon in attracting members to the People's Party. [It] "seems to have pierced the thick blubber of the Republican whale," one newspaper stated. "Judging from the rage, pain, and terror of the beast, his vitals have been touched."<sup>44</sup> Contemporary scholars also lauded the importance of the book. William D.P. Bliss, editor of the *Encyclopedia of Social Reform* (1898), asserted that the book contributed significantly to financial history.<sup>45</sup> Sarah Emery proved equally

effective on the lecture circuit. Described as a "force of superior intellect", she could make people "cry or cheer" with her delivery.<sup>46</sup> Joseph Darling, a Norton, Kansas farmer, declared "her equal is not living."<sup>47</sup>

Mary E. Lease and Sarah Emery were controversial figures in the Alliance and the People's Party. Lease, often contradictory and inconsistent, was always driven by humanitarian principles.<sup>48</sup> Emery and Lease have been accused of saddling the Populists with the epithets of "nativist" and "anti-Semitism" because of their references to Shylock, Rothschild, Jewish bankers, and British gold.<sup>49</sup> One writer has assigned most of the responsibility for the nativism within the People's Party to those who favored woman's suffrage and prohibition which, unsurprisingly, meant mostly women.<sup>50</sup> Dismissing, however, women who were prosuffrage and protemperance as part of a radical fringe element within the Alliance and the Populist Party discounts the significant contributions of many of these same women to the articulation and development of Populism. Or, to refer to their efforts as "adding color" to the campaign betrays a bias concerning their substantial contributions to the movement.<sup>51</sup> Other scholars, by placing the rhetoric of Lease and Emery, and of the Alliance and the Populist Party in context have argued persuasively that the words used and the tone of delivery were no different than those employed by both major political parties and in much of the nation's literature and many of its newspapers.<sup>52</sup>

Although Diggs, Lease, and Emery achieved more fame than most, many other women also participated in the populist movement. In the summer of 1890 a large number of Kansas women engaged in giving lectures, writing for and running newspapers, and organizing rallies that contributed significantly to the

political uprising that gripped Kansas. The *Winfield American Nonconformist* (Kansas), reporting on the success of two "monster demonstrations" in Emporia, announced "Mrs. Vickery with her sisters...in the alliance, have earned the honors quite as much as any four times the number of men."<sup>53</sup> Mrs. Fanny McCormack, People's Party candidate for State Superintendent of Public Instruction, campaigned throughout the state.<sup>54</sup> And Ben H. Clover, president of the Kansas Farmers' Alliance, appointed a committee of five women to create a group to educate and inform Alliance members on the important issues of the day.<sup>55</sup> Even the opposition newspaper the *Salina Daily Republican*, recognized the significant role women played in the 1890 Kansas election.<sup>56</sup> If the state of Kansas served to lead the Farmers' Alliance to the national People's Party, as some have suggested, recognition must be given to the women who helped lead the alliances and the People's Party in Kansas.<sup>57</sup>

The fact that women had limited suffrage in Kansas aided their efforts. They gained the right to vote in school elections in 1861, and in 1887, the franchise was extended to municipal elections.<sup>58</sup> Certainly some of those in leadership positions within the Alliance and the People's Party drew on their experience in the suffrage movement to aid them in their other efforts. Likewise many women in the alliances and in Populism gained some political experience in various prohibition campaigns between the 1860s and the 1890s. In many cases though the most eminent women leaders in the Alliance and later the Populist Party made woman's suffrage and prohibition subservient to the larger economic and political goals of the Alliance and the People's Party.<sup>59</sup>

The women involved in the movement regarded their role as perfectly logical. "Women are citizens, and have life,

liberty, and property to defend and transmit... and therefore have a right to discuss all questions that affect the welfare of the home," wrote Hattie Huntington. "To be truly womanly does not imply that we shall be idiots."<sup>60</sup> This connection of domestic and political concerns enabled women to justify their political participation and to maintain that they had important functions to perform in the home and the government.<sup>61</sup> Women read Alliance papers, attended meetings and kept themselves informed on the important issues of the day. Although they lacked the right of suffrage, many agreed with alliance lecturer Mrs. W.F. Davis that it was their "duty to give good advice to our husbands and brothers; if they don't take it that's their loss."<sup>62</sup>

Women, however, realized that poor choices at the ballot box worked hardships on all alike. Allie Marsh, correspondent for the *Raleigh Progressive Farmer* (North Carolina), stated in a lecture that women had no objection to the male monopoly of the franchise as long as they used it with vigilance.<sup>63</sup> This gentle prodding even carried over into song. Clara M. Egan, in a tune titled, "Are You Going to Vote Aright", put the question thus:

The ballot box is mighty,  
It rules o'er all the land;  
You hold the nation's safety  
Within your good right hand;  
Will you use the power wisely,  
And work with all your might  
To save our glorious country?  
Are you going to vote aright?<sup>64</sup>

The trouble one woman wrote, was that "some men can't see beyond their nose [sic]."<sup>65</sup> Another argued that if men would not listen to common sense, they should be left "at home on election day to rock the babies, while the women go to the polls and work for the good of the cause in which they are enlisted."<sup>66</sup>

To aid the "Cause," women advocates voiced some of the earliest calls for the Alliances to reject the traditional parties and join in forming a third party on the national level. One such appeal came from Mary Lease's *Colorado Workman*: "...farmers and laboring men will probably learn, after a few more years of toil and starvation, that one of the impossible things in this world is to obtain the repeal of bad laws through the parties that enacted them."<sup>67</sup> Merlinda Sisins, a columnist for the *National Economist*, made a similar suggestion for the creation of a third party. If the farmers would only heed the advice of an old woman, and enter the race they could "elect every officer from president to constable."<sup>68</sup> Within a month Sisins clamored for action: "...will you farmers and laborers unite together at the ballot box, or will you wait until there will be no remedy but the bayonet?"<sup>69</sup> Bettie Gay castigated men for sticking with the old parties and challenged them to be independent. "Any man that will say stick to the old parties...is a coward, and deserves to be robbed for he has lost his manhood..., she declared. "Let us have a peoples president in 1892... I am with you; through the fight be men, and demand your rights in the union."<sup>70</sup>

Despite the success in Kansas in 1890, the call for a People's Party on the national level met defeat when the Supreme Council of the National Farmers' Alliance and Industrial Union (N.F.A. & I.U.) met in Ocala, Florida, on December 3 of that year. Annie Diggs, and other women lobbied at Ocala, but many in the Alliance opposed forming a new party, believing that the entrance of the Farmers' Alliance into politics would cause its downfall.<sup>71</sup> Most of the opposition occurred in the South, where loyalty to the Democratic Party (a legacy of the Civil War) remained strong. Diggs, however, had even failed to gain the unanimous support of her fellow Kansans. The

chairman of the Kansas delegation thought it premature to talk about a national third party.<sup>72</sup> However, those pressing for a new political organization agreed at Ocala to meet in February of 1892 to reconsider the question.

The compromise reached at Ocala soon faded. Unhappy with the Florida meeting, the more radical members of the Alliance called for a reform convention to meet in Cincinnati in May of 1891, in order to form a national third party. Delegates to that meeting included the editors of all Alliance newspapers, several as has been mentioned above, were women. Sarah Emery served on both the Platform Committee and the National Committee (the executive body of the new party).<sup>73</sup> Those opposed to forming a new political organization sent few delegates to the gathering. Indeed, the South contributed less than forty delegates, out of 1,400 who attended. On the other hand, the Kansas delegation numbered 400, who this time, united on the need for a new party.<sup>74</sup> The May 1891 meeting resulted in the official creation of a national People's Party. In an effort to unite with the Farmers' Alliance the Cincinnati convention postponed action on a time and place for a national nominating convention until after the N.F.A. & I.U. met in February of 1892.<sup>75</sup>

However, the Farmers' Alliance remained hesitant to join the People's Party. When the Supreme Council of the N.F.A. & I.U. held its annual meeting at Indianapolis on November 17, 1891, the agenda made no provision to discuss a third party. The ninety-four delegates did, however, elect officers that favored the People's Party.<sup>76</sup> Prominent delegates included Mary Lease, Annie Diggs, Sarah Emery and Bettie Gay, in addition to eight other women active in Alliance politics.<sup>77</sup> With the election of officers favorable to a new national political organization, everything seemed in order for a merger

of the Farmers' Alliance with the People's Party when the Alliance met in February of 1892 in St. Louis. Once again several women served as delegates when the N.F.A. & I.U. convened in St. Louis. In addition, the delegates elected women to convention offices and committees. By unanimous voice vote they elected famous suffragette Frances Willard as vice-president of the meeting.<sup>78</sup> As with many conventions, some of the most important battles took place in the credentials committee. That group made every effort to seat delegates favorable to joining the Alliance to the People's Party. A key member of the committee, Mary Stevens of Ohio, impressed those who appeared before the group as being "the brightest member of the body--one who would have her own way, or who would be supplied with a perfectly satisfactory reason why."<sup>79</sup> These delegates in turn selected a group of fifteen, including Mary Lease and Mrs. Debbs, a Texas doctor, to meet with the Executive Committee of the People's Party.<sup>80</sup> As a result of that meeting the National Farmers' Alliance and Industrial Union decided to actively support the new political party. The two groups announced that on July 4, 1892 a national nominating convention would be held in Omaha, Nebraska. At last the Alliances had joined the People's Party.

When the convention gathered in Omaha, the People's Party nominated James B. Weaver, a retired Union general from Iowa, for president. In recognition of her contributions to the cause, Mary Elizabeth Lease received the honor of making the seconding speech.<sup>81</sup> Having made major contributions toward creating the Populist Party, women now turned to the task of helping that party win the election. Once again they picked up their pens and prepared for the lecture platform.

Women contributed the same energy and intensity to the new cause that had

marked their years in the Alliance movement. Annie Diggs toured California, speaking to thousands in thirteen cities in thirteen days.<sup>82</sup> She also published scathing articles in the press, attacking the old parties' politics. Mindful that the government's policies worked hardship on both the farmer and the urban poor, Diggs castigated the traditional parties for the conditions in the cities of America. Those policies, she charged, resulted in thousands of unemployed and bore responsibility for "the famine-pinched, emaciated babies, sweltering and gasping in foul allcys, reeking with green slime, fetid with the stench of offal, horrible with vermin."<sup>83</sup> Mary Lease campaigned in several states of the South with presidential nominee Weaver.<sup>84</sup> Sarah Emery returned to the lecture platform. In various states the women involved in the Alliances actively campaigned for the new party. On September 17, 1892, Mary Lease wrote, "The united and embattled hosts of organized labor will rescue the perishing and send forth the sanitary angel of justice with the flaming sword of liberty to drive from our land the miasma of poverty and sin...."<sup>85</sup> Women, first in the Alliances and then in the People's Party, had demonstrated that they, as well as men, could wield that sword with considerable effectiveness.

Too often historians have seen only the unique--the names of Lease, Diggs, and Emery are duly noted, as they should be--but to stop there is unfair to the thousands of women who participated in the alliances and the Populist Party. It has been argued that although women were able to "express themselves within the movement...they and their concerns were never fully integrated into it."<sup>86</sup> Such a view is too narrow. The inability to win support for woman's suffrage and prohibition on the national level does not indicate a failure by women to achieve their domestic and political goals. It may



indicate an unrealistic expectation of how quickly such things could be accomplished in a pluralistic democracy. As many have noted much of what the Populist and feminist sought, including suffrage and prohibition, came to pass a generation later.

Women played an important role in the Farmer's Alliance and the People's Party. They attended meetings (indeed in some local alliances women members outnumbered men),<sup>87</sup> held office, published and wrote for Alliance newspapers, gave numerous speeches urging reform, and involved themselves in politicking on all levels of the Alliances and the Populist Party. Although a

minority group in both movements, women were recognized, held positions of importance, and made a positive contribution to both crusades. And much of what Populism did accomplish had a very real impact, directly and indirectly, on the lives of women.<sup>88</sup> Emerson Hough lamenting on the absence of women in written history wrote that the principal figure of the American West had been "the gaunt and sad-faced woman sitting in the front seat of the wagon."<sup>89</sup> But he complained, her story had yet to be told. As historians fill in the particulars, the realization emerges that the influence and involvement of women permeates the tale of United States history.

#### NOTES

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21. *Washington National Economist*, 1 October 1892.
22. For a representative sampling of articles see: *Topeka Advocate*, 20 February, 11 June 1890; *Washington National Economist*, 8 March, 31 May, 19 July 1890; 24 January, 7 March, 27 June 1891.
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