

# Oswego: The First City to Grant Women Right to Vote in This State

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## A Letter to the Editor by Mrs. Christina M. Sinnamon

*(One of the first to advocate woman's right to the ballot)*

*To the Editor of the Palladium:*

Sir – With your permission, I would like to say a few words through the columns of your valuable paper, on the woman's suffrage cause in Oswego twenty years ago and since that time.

In the Winter of 1894, when the Constitution of this State was last revised, the immortal Susan B. Anthony made a tour of the State, speaking in every county, advocating the enfranchisement of woman, and in this city and many other cities political equality clubs were organized. Volunteers were secured to circulate a petition by a house to house canvass; said petition was to be presented to the men at Albany, who had

been chosen to revise the Constitution of the State, asking them to strike out the word "male." Thousands of the leading citizens signed the petition, which in due time was sent to Albany, but the request was not granted. But the cause of woman's suffrage had been respectfully brought to the attention of the men who had

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this work in charge.

That same Winter, the Charter of the city of Oswego was revised by a number of public spirited men who gave their time to do this work without compensation, and who were known as the Charter Revision Committee, Mr. H. H. Lyman, S. M. Coon

and the Hon. P. W. Cullinan were members of this committee; I do not now recall the names of the others. These men asked through the press for suggestions from the citizens with reference to the new Charter, and several of the women, who at that time had espoused the cause of woman suffrage, answered by writing open letters to them through the press, asking that women receive some recognition in the new Charter, and especially women who were property owners.

And when the new Charter appeared there was one word in it that was not in the old one, "female". The city cannot be bonded for any purpose without the consent of the taxpayers,

The Oswego Daily  
Palladium,  
Saturday, June 21, 1913  
[http://  
nyshistoricnewspapers.org/  
lccn/  
sn88075670/1913-06-21/  
ed-1/seq-3/](http://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88075670/1913-06-21/ed-1/seq-3/)

male and female.”

And during the past twenty years the city has been bonded several times for a much needed improvement, and the women who, through a property qualification, were eligible to cast a vote, came in large numbers and cast their ballots for the improvement.

I am calling attention to this fact, as it is possible that there are many who do not know how it came to pass that they were allowed to cast a ballot, and now it will be clear to them, and they can appreciate what was granted to them by public spirited men who revised the Charter in 1894.

Oswego was the first city in the State to give bond suffrage to the women holding property. The State has granted school suffrage to the women in the rural districts, by legislation. First and second class cities have not even a fraction of suffrage. Much has been done to advance the cause of woman's suffrage in Oswego the past twenty years. All the leaders in the cause have been brought here more than once by the Political Equality Club: Mrs. Carry Chapman Cait, who at present time is President of the international organization; Dr. Anna Shaw, of the National American Suffrage Association; the Rev. Annie Ford Eastman, and Susan B. Anthony, who was here three times during this interval.

Returning for a few days to my home city, it is pleasing to me to find suffrage headquarters opened in the business part of the city, and also it is very gratifying to me to learn that many young women are not espousing the cause.

Respectfully submitted,

Christina M. Sinnamon was originally from Oswego and eventually moved to Manlius. She was a well-known woman suffragist.



Susan B. Anthony; This image is in the public domain in its country of origin and other countries and areas where the copyright term is the author's life plus 70 years or less.

# OSWEGO THE FIRST CITY

## To Grant Women Right to Vote in This State.

**Mrs. Christina M. Sinnamon, Among  
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do not know how it came to pass that they were allowed to cast a ballot, and now it will be clear to them, and they can appreciate what has been granted to them by the public spirited men who revised the Charter in 1894.

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Respectfully submitted,  
CHRISTINA M. SINNAMON.

### **Questions regarding the Letter to the Editor:**

1. What did Susan B. Anthony do in the Winter of 1894?
2. What was the main idea for the petition that citizens signed and sent to Albany?
3. When was the Charter of the city of Oswego revised?
4. Who revised the Oswego city Charter?
5. How did the women in the city of Oswego get their request to recognize women in the city Charter across to the men revising the Charter?
6. What one word was added to the Charter?
7. Who were able to vote for city improvements as a result of the change to the Charter?
8. What did the State grant women in rural school districts?
9. How many times did Susan B. Anthony visit Oswego over the years?
10. What is Christina M. Sinnamon most proud of in her home town?

### **Questions for further research and discussion:**

1. Using city directories, census, and other historical documents, what other information can you discover about Christina M. Sinnamon?
2. The Constitution of the State of New York was revised in 1894. Why do you think striking out the term “male” was denied even though citizens sent petitions to Albany?
3. Why do you think the city of Oswego added the word “female” while the state did not eliminate the term “male” from the state constitution?
4. After the new Charter, the city of Oswego let women who owned property vote on bonds. What are bonds and why could female property owners now vote on bonds?
5. How many women were property owners in the city of Oswego at this time?
6. What was school suffrage for rural women?
7. Why was Christina Sinnamon excited to young women espouse women’s suffrage?