

# “Lovely Woman”

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## “Lovely Woman” She Stoops to Register

Mrs. General Mary E. Walker, Mrs. Captain R. C. Spencer, and  
Some Fifty More Masculine Females Want to Vote in Washington

*The Tyrant Man Won't Let 'Em*

**Somebody kindly sends** us a copy of the *Washington Sunday Gazette* of April 16<sup>th</sup>, which contains a graphic and intensely interesting account of a raide made by several leading ladies of Washington on Friday last upon the Board of Registrars then sitting in that most excellent city.

And prominent among the famous persons engaged in this familiar to us of Oswego, the same being our own Mrs. General Dr. Mary E. Walker, and Mrs. Captain R. C. Spencer. Among the followers of those leaders we find the names of General Belva A. Lockwood, Mrs. Sarah J. Lippencott, (Grace Greenwood), Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth, Mrs. Amanda Wall, (colored), Mrs. Mary Anderson, (colored) and about fifty others more or less known to renown.

The chairman of the Board received on Friday morning, a note from Gen. Dr. Mary E. Walker, which conveyed the cheerful intelligence that a number of citizens of the District of Columbia of the female persuasion would present themselves for registration in the afternoon. This created a sensation, and the reporters of the press were on hand at the time specified. Gens. Mary E. Walker, and Belva A. Lockwood came first in a carriage. They were soon followed by a large number of female suffragans. They walked into

the court room and demanded to be registered, at the same time presenting the following memorial, to which were appended some hundred or more names of crowing hens:

We, the undersigned, citizens of Washington, D. C., believing it to be our solemn duty – a part of the allegiance we owe to our Maker, to our country, and to our homes – to exercise the right of the elective franchise, hereby earnestly petition that our names be registered as qualified voters in our several districts.

The registrars were somewhat confused, and the bashful members blushed radiantly. Some of them said they didn't know any good reason why the ladies shouldn't register, while one tyrant named Harper, and a married man at that, said women had no business to meddle with politics and he told the applicants they would look better at home attending to their domestic duties.

To this responded the undaunted Gen. Walker:

“Gentlemen: These women have assembled to exercise the right of citizens of a professed-to-be republican country, and if you debar them of the right to register, you but add new proof that this is a tyrannical government, sustained by force and not by justice. So

Newspaper article from:  
The Oswego Daily Palladium,  
April 19, 1871

long as you tax women, and deprive them of the right of franchise, you but make yourselves tyrants. You imprison women for crimes you have forbidden women to legislate (sic) upon.”

“If you men were really the protectors of women, as you profess to be, you would not deprive these women of a true registration, for if you, with all your superior physical strength, need the ballot to protect you, how much more do women need it for their protection?”

Here one of the board interrupted the speaker, and said, “You must marry a voter if you want a protector.” The General, who was dressed in the style we last saw in Oswego, looked squarely into the eyes of the speaker and said: “We didn’t come here to marry voters, but to exercise the privilege of free born American citizens.” If they had a spark of manhood in their natures they would register them properly and abide the consequences. “This day I have visited women in prison who have had no voice in making the laws under which they suffer.”

The ladies thronged around the valiant General, and cheered her by look and word. But it was all in vain. The cruel Board refused to write the names of the citizens on their books, and they retired in disgust – Gen. Walker assuring the inexorable officers that she would take legal means for redress.

The readers of *The Palladium* will be pleased to learn that this great movement for the enfranchisement of “lovely woman” at the Capital of the Republic, though, for the time defeated, was led by two of Oswego’s valiant daughters, and that hereafter they will be recognized as the leading spirits of the revolution, which shall result in allowing our wives, sisters and sweethearts to enter the fragrant walks of politics, to vote and be voted for, to make Congress-women, Members of the Assembly, Common Councilers (sic) and all that. When this blessed reform shall have been accomplished the names of Mrs. Gen. Dr. Mary E. Walker, and Mrs. Capt. R. C. Spencer will be found inscribed in golden letters high upon the scroll of fame.

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**SHE STOOPS TO REGISTER.**  
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Mrs. Captain R. C. Spencer cheered the General, but made no remark. Encouraged by this the General continued:

"If you men were really the protectors of women, as you profess to be, you would not deprive these women of a true registration, for if you, with all your superior physical strength, need the ballot to protect you, how much more do women need it for their protection?"

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#### Questions from the article:

1. Where did the information from this article first appear?
2. Who were the women involved in this event?
3. Why did the women in Washington D.C. believe it was their duty to register to vote?
4. What was the response by most of the registrars?
5. What was Harper's response to the applicants?
6. What was Dr. Mary Walker's response to Harper? How did she handle the situation?
7. When the women could not register, what did they promise?

#### Questions for further research and discussion:

1. How does the title of the article set the stage for the content of the article?
2. Who were the women mentioned as leading ladies in the article? How did they know each other?
3. From city directories, other articles, census reports, can you determine any more information about these women?
4. How would Harper's response to the women to go home and attend to their domestic duties go over in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?
5. Explain what Dr. Walker meant when she was comparing men's strength to women's need to register?
6. How does Oswego celebrate the achievements of Dr. Mary Walker and Mrs. Capt. R. C. Spencer today?