

Letter from Linda French

May 5, 1912

Collection of Historic Richmond Town | 96.020.0001

1046 Trinity Ave., May 5, 1912

Dear Mamma, - The great day has come and gone, - and a great day it was, too. As one of the girls said to me, just as we turned into Carnegie Hall, "Wasn't it a grand and glorious success, and weren't you just proud to feel that you were a part of it?" To which I responded, "Indeed I am"!

You will read much better accounts that I can give, because the one great drawback to being in it, was that we couldn't see it. We regretted that we didn't march with the teachers, instead of the college league, because the teachers were among the first, and we might have seen the rest after we had finished our march. As it was, we were almost the last, so that although the first of the line started promptly at five o' clock and reached Carnegie Hall just at six, we didn't swing into line until after 6, and it was a little after seven before we got there. By actual count, there were 600 college women in our division, and I know that there were hundreds of them scattered among other contingents. 2,000 women in all, - and 500,000 out to see us! And the crowd was respectful on the whole. Of course there were a few street- corner loafers (of the type that called poor Miss Jonselyn (?) "Bluejay" once, in Holbrook!) who tried to be funny; but the crowd didn't cheer them. All along the line were banners and flags, and we were cheered over and over. I didn't a hiss; and the papers say there weren't any.

No one can say (and no one has even hinted) that it wasn't a perfectly dignified and orderly affair, from beginning to end. I wouldn't have missed it for anything.

And as to its effect on the public! Well, there are two or three people in this house who talks in very different strain today than they did last week...

I had an invitation dinner yesterday, - from Mary White. She wrote that she had started several times to see me, but had been hindered each time. Of course I had to decline, as I could not go there and march in the suffrage parade also! So I judged Mary was not going to march.

I didn't see any teachers I knew in the procession, but they may have been in the teachers' divisions. One of Miss Bradley's colleagues was with us, and her sisters, who teaches at Richmond Hill. They wore buttons which they got in London two years ago, and of which they were very proud. They said their only regret was that their father and mother were not living to know about it.

I saw some caps that looked more battered than mine, so I didn't feel troubled about that at all. Besides, I might have been supposed to have hired it, as a great many girls did. Miss Bradley got her gown pressed, but I just hung mine in the line & it didn't look bad at all. I wore my blue coat under it, as it was rather cool, and was perfectly comfortable.

Well, I guess you won't care to read any more of this, so I will stop.

Love to all,

Linda

Letter from Linda French

October 23, 1913

Collection of Historic Richmond Town | 96.020.0002

26 Stuyvesant Place

New Brighton, N.Y.

October 23, 1913

Dear Mamma, - We have a good warm fire in the furnace today, which seems very nice, as the last day or two have been rather chilly. I will write a few lines before going out for my "constitutional," newspaper etc.

As you see the "Globe" I don't need to add much about Mrs. Pankhurst's meeting. It all happened just as it said, though I don't think as many "melted away" as was stated there. I don't know how long it lasted, of course, we came away about 10:40 as we thought the eleven o'clock boat would not bring us home away too early. So of course the crowd the crowd may have diminished more if she held out until morning! The speech was over by two o'clock, but she was answering questions. She is an attractive woman, quiet in manner, and a very logical speaker, so that her lecture was very interesting and the audience was very attentive. It was not a wildly hilarious crowd, though there was plenty of applause, but it was a noticeably serious audience, who were there apparently to listen to what she had to say and not merely from curiosity. I don't think I ever felt that so strongly in any assembly before. Everyone there seemed to be a thinker. The seat-selling business was a scandal and "an outrage," as Gilbert would say. The poorer seats were so far away from the stage that no one could possibly have seen or heard much, but everyone who bought a ticket was told at the office that it was "right opposite the platform," or "very close," most of which tales were lies, pure & simple. Our seats were fair, to begin with, though not what they told us they would be; but we joined the march to the floor later on and got still better ones. Miss Whitmore upbraided the ushers & other officials & told them such practices would injure the cause, - anyone who was rather lukewarm would be disgusted. She afterwards remarked to me that all "causes" seemed to have something cranky about their management, -suffrage, or temperance, or whatever it is...

Well- much love to all – Linda

Letter from Linda French

November 7, 1917

Collection of Historic Richmond Town | 96.020.0003

Staten Island, November 7, 1917

Dear Mamma, - How did you get around Uncle Sam last Saturday & get your letter through for 2 cents? I'm afraid Frank Megley wasn't on the job! Anyway I got the letter with no due-stamp, on it & Mrs. Patterson hasn't dunned me for the extra cent so far!

I was going to write you last night, but thought I would wait until there was something known about results. Of course none who care for good government can help feeling sorry to have Hylan get in, with all that the Tammany control implies; but it would be expecting more than human nature is capable of to ask me to shed many tears for Mitchell & Prendergast (Considering the superior merit bill!), when there is other wonderful news to rejoice over! I really didn't dare expect anything quite so glorious. I didn't dare rejoice too much this morning, remembering the bitter after clap last year; but the afternoon papers report a bigger majority rather than a smaller one, so I guess it is pretty safe now. I'm glad I have marched and worked a little, though I fear it wasn't much. I shall enjoy the exercise of my new "rights" much more to know I have "done my bit" towards helping to win them! Anyhow I've always stood up for it & declared my colors! Unless something happens to take me away from New York, it looks as if your daughter will cast her first vote before you do, lady! You'd better get out & vote for school committee next spring to prevent any such impropriety! I don't suppose I can match Aunt Mary's record of being the first woman at the polls! Anyway it will be a whole year before I can vote!

I didn't have a hard time yesterday except that I had to stand there for four solid hours, and got rather weary & decidedly hollow inside (the hours being 10:30-2:30). I had not expected to stay quite so long or I should have eaten something before I went on duty. I simply stood as near as the law allows to the polling place and handed each man going to the poll a suffrage leaflet. It was quite interesting to see the way they took it. Some were quite expressionless, others grinned. Nobody was fresh at all, and those who spoke said they would vote for it. Quite a number when they came out said they had done so, and two confided to me that they were recent converts. "I'm with you now; I was against it before." "Well, youse got mine!"- "I voted early this morning and sure I voted for youse!"- "keep that for the next fellow; I'm going to vote for it anyway." One man pushed the paper aside, quite smilingly- "I don't think you need to, -see?" And pointed to a letter he was wearing!

I think the President's letter helped a good deal, - in which he said he hoped picketers would not influence anyone against it. The New York State party had passed resolutions condemning that crazy action, anyway...

It is nearly dinner time, so no more for now. Much love to you all - Linda

The muff & hat came safely- much obliged- L