Letter from Hortense Flexner King to Mary Jane Cherry, February 20, 1972

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Description:

Letter from Hortense Flexner King to Mary Jane Cherry, Feb. 20, 1972. From private collection of Mary Jane Cherry.

Transcribed:

Feb. 20, 1972
Dear Mary Jane -

As I was getting ready to go to sleep last night, your grandmother and I began to talk of the early days of woman suffrage. Now it happened that suffrage was a very important matter to the Woman's Club of Louisville, (the building still stands) and we made and listened to many speeches on this subject. My older sister, Jennie, was one of the speakers and nobody made a sound while she was speaking. As I was in the clubhouse as a reporter, I hurried back to my desk to write my story. Later on, it was printed in the paper.

But the suffragists were clever women and numbered among them Mrs. Desha Breckinridge, Mrs. James Leach, and Mrs. Patty B. Semple and other still well known in Louisville.

At this same time also, it was decided to hold a big convention here, and to bring important women from all parts of the country.

From the strangers(?) we elected a committee to go to go to Frankfort, to address the legislature for woman suffrage.

Among these speakers I heard Mrs. Desha Breckinridge who spoke without notes, and whose voice was beautiful. All the reporters sat in the first room and very proud we were too. I still remember what a remarkable speaker Mrs. Breckinridge was, for though I tried very hard to make notes on what she said, I could not keep up with her.

The best reporters in the city came to the meetings, and all the papers carried full reports on what was said.

We did not have the kind of battles the English suffragettes had to put up with. These women brought ropes and tied themselves to tree boxes, so the policemen could not drag them off to gaol - But it was different in London, for many were arrested, imprisoned and tried. Not however in Louisville.

The name of their great leader was Mrs. Pankhurst which I think you will remember - and what she said was printed in the London as well [as] New York newspapers. She was a very small woman with a fine voice that carried to every corner of the hall.

We also organized processions and I walked in one of them with two friends on each side of the street -
So you see suffrage was a big question here, in spite of the fact that Henry Watterson, editor of the Courier Journal was set against us. If he wrote an editorial about us, which he often did, he called us "crazy janes and silly sallies"