



*Votes for "Everywoman"*

## Nellie Griswold Francis, the Women of Rondo, and Their Suffrage Crusade

LEETTA M. DOUGLAS, PAGE 1

Cameos (top to bottom): Lillian McKnight, May Black Mason, Elnora Smith, Bessie Miller

## By the Numbers . . .

Sinclair Lewis was the first US citizen to win the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1930. The Minnesota-born author, whose doctor father once worried his son would never make anything of himself, wrote twenty-three novels, many of which were adapted to film.

Interscholastic athletic teams on which Harry Sinclair Lewis played in high school:

0<sup>a</sup>

By 1930, languages into which one or more of Lewis's novels had been translated:

13<sup>b</sup>

*Main Street's* rank on the Modern Library list of 100 Best Novels:

68<sup>c</sup>

Appearances on college syllabi of Sinclair Lewis's work:

399<sup>d</sup>

Rank of Lewis's *It Can't Happen Here* on Amazon's Top 100 list in January 2017:

4<sup>e</sup>

Minnesota-born writers who have won the Nobel Prize for Literature:

2<sup>f</sup>

To learn more about the author, see Ralph L. Goldstein's article "The View from Summit Avenue: Inspiration Point for Sinclair Lewis's *Main Street*" on page 12.

SOURCES: See page 23.

### ON THE COVER

Portrait of Nellie Griswold Francis by artist Jennifer Soriano, based on an image from *The Appeal*, May 7, 1921. Original is a 16" x 11" charcoal drawing with sprayed gouache and a Sumi-nagashi ink print wash on heavyweight watercolor paper, which will be part of an upcoming *Persistence: Continuing the Struggle for Suffrage and Equality, 1848–2020* exhibition at Ramsey County Historical Society. Art courtesy of Ramsey County Historical Society. Cameo images from *Musical America* 28. Courtesy of University of Minnesota Libraries.



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## Message from the Editorial Board

As always, the stories of our people make history. We are pleased to publish Leetta Douglas's profile of Nellie Griswold Francis, a Black suffragist and civil rights leader in Saint Paul during the early twentieth century. Francis and a group of determined women worked to advance the cause of women's right to vote with the Everywoman Suffrage Club in the Rondo neighborhood and later supported progressive causes nationally. This issue also features Ralph Goldstein's article on Sinclair Lewis's ties to Saint Paul, where he wrote parts of his novels, including *Main Street*, which was published one hundred years ago. And Mark Taylor presents the story of Perrie Jones, longtime city librarian, whose legacy includes establishing The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library. Finally, we note that we will miss Paul Verret, who acted as a wise steward of philanthropy. During his term as RCHS board chair and continuing on, Paul had unflagging faith in our mission and our ability to fulfill it.

Anne Cowie  
Chair, Editorial Board

**Correction:** Regrets to Campbell Casper, whose first and last names were reversed in the article "Public Archaeology: Unearthing the Past in Ramsey County and Beyond" in the Spring 2020 issue.

The Ramsey County Historical Society thanks Board Member James A. Stolpestad and affiliate AHS Legacy Fund for supporting the updated design of this magazine. Publication of Ramsey County History is also supported in part by a gift from Clara M. Claussen and Frieda H. Claussen in memory of Henry H. Cowie Jr., and by a contribution from the late Reuel D. Harmon. Thanks to the Sinclair Lewis Foundation, the Sinclair Lewis Society, and The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library for their financial support.

## Everywoman Suffrage Club/Everywoman Progressive Council Members and other women working toward voting rights 1914 to 1922

<p><b>Madam Jessie Alexander</b> <i>Jessie Alexander, clerk, St. Paul Athletic Club</i> 667 W. Central Avenue</p>	Council member in "The Deacon's Awakening," 1921.
<p><b>Madam Emma Archer</b> <i>W. S. Archer, porter</i> 493 Carroll Avenue</p>	Applauded in <i>St. Paul Daily News</i> and <i>The Appeal</i> for work in securing Republican nomination.
<p><b>Miss Albreta Bell</b></p>	Gave a piano solo at July 1916 meeting. Marched in prohibition parade with Nellie Francis. Attended National Association of Colored Women's Clubs August convention in Baltimore in 1916.
<p><b>Madam Julia Billups</b> <i>Jas J. Billups, carpenter</i> 1527 Cumberland</p>	Council member in "The Deacon's Awakening," 1921.
<p><b>Madam J. Blackburn</b></p>	Applauded in <i>St. Paul Daily News</i> and <i>The Appeal</i> for work in securing Republican nomination.
<p><b>Madam William Bolden</b> <i>William H. Bolden, waiter, NPRR</i> 410 Carroll Avenue</p>	Applauded in <i>St. Paul Daily News</i> and <i>The Appeal</i> for work in securing Republican nomination.
<p><b>Madam Grant Bush</b> <i>Grant Bush, laborer, post office</i> 396 Rondo Avenue</p>	Applauded in <i>St. Paul Daily News</i> and <i>The Appeal</i> for work in securing Republican nomination. Council member in "The Deacon's Awakening," 1921.
<p><b>Madam G. W. Camp</b> <i>Rev. G. W. Camp, Zion Presbyterian Church</i> 377 Farrington Avenue</p>	Attended luncheon of the Minnesota State Suffrage Association, 1917.
<p><b>Madam Mary Carter</b> <i>Possibly single, assistant, seamstress, stenographer</i></p>	Election Day Ballot Judge, 1920. Council member in "The Deacon's Awakening," 1921.
<p><b>Madam Lula Chapman</b> <i>Richard B. Chapman, waiter, Minnesota Club</i> Nellie Francis's sister who lived with Nellie</p>	Council member in "The Deacon's Awakening," 1921.
<p><b>Madam A. B. Cook, possibly T. B. Cook, Mrs. R. Cook</b></p>	Election Day Ballot Judge, 1920. Council member in "The Deacon's Awakening," 1921.
<p><b>Mrs. E. Craig</b> <i>Edward Craig, porter</i> 322 13th Street</p>	Actor in "The Deacon's Awakening," 1921.
<p><b>Mrs. Frances M. Davenport</b></p>	Applauded in <i>St. Paul Daily News</i> and <i>The Appeal</i> for work in securing Republican nomination.
<p><b>Mrs. J. H. Dillingham</b> <i>John Dillingham, janitor</i> 779 Carroll Avenue</p>	Applauded in <i>St. Paul Daily News</i> and <i>The Appeal</i> for work in securing Republican nomination.
<p><b>Madam George Duckett</b> <i>George Duckett, porter</i> 687 St. Anthony Avenue</p>	Applauded in <i>St. Paul Daily News</i> and <i>The Appeal</i> for work in securing Republican nomination.
<p><b>Madam Lizzie J. Dyer</b> <i>Possibly single, seamstress, Golden Rule</i></p>	Council member in "The Deacon's Awakening," 1921.
<p><b>Mrs. W. J. Echols</b> <i>W. J. Echols, waiter, GNRR</i> 485 Thomas Street</p>	Hosted meeting October 26, 1918, at her home.
<p><b>Madam W. B. Elliott</b> <i>William B. Elliott, grocer</i> 415 University Avenue</p>	Council member in "The Deacon's Awakening," 1921.
<p><b>Madam Nellie Griswold Francis</b> <i>William T. Francis, attorney</i> 606 St. Anthony Avenue 2095 Sargent Avenue (1925-1927)</p>	President, Everywoman's Suffrage Club, 1914-1920. Chairman, Press Committee with National Association of Colored Women's Clubs in St. Paul. President, Everywoman's Suffrage Council, 1920-1925? Election Day Ballot Judge, 1920. Applauded in <i>St. Paul Daily News</i> and <i>The Appeal</i> for work in securing Republican nomination. Progressive Council representative at the League of Women Voters convention, December 1920, where she was given the floor to denounce lynching. Actor in "The Deacon's Awakening," 1921.
<p><b>Miss Charlotte Gillard</b> <i>Possibly single, clerk</i></p>	Council member in "The Deacon's Awakening," 1921.

<b>Mrs. Edith Gillard</b>	Actor in "The Deacon's Awakening," 1921.
<b>Madam W. Green</b> <i>William L. Green?, waiter, GNRR</i> 1004 Iglehart?	Applauded in <i>St. Paul Daily News</i> and <i>The Appeal</i> for work in securing Republican nomination.
<b>Madam David (Amy?) Hall</b> <i>David Hall, waiter</i> 528 W. Central Avenue	Applauded in <i>St. Paul Daily News</i> and <i>The Appeal</i> for work in securing Republican nomination. Council member in "The Deacon's Awakening," 1921.
<b>Madam O. C. Hall</b> <i>Orrington Hall, barber</i> 727 St. Anthony Avenue	Attended luncheon of the Minnesota Suffrage Association, 1917. Council member in "The Deacon's Awakening," 1921. Applauded in <i>St. Paul Daily News</i> and <i>The Appeal</i> for work in securing Republican nomination..
<b>Mrs. Samuel Hatcher</b> <i>Samuel Hatcher, janitor</i> 377 Aurora Avenue	Treasurer, Suffrage Club, 1914.
<b>Mrs. Horace Henderson</b> <i>Horace Henderson, barber</i> 416 Carroll Avenue	Everywoman Progressive Council representative at the League of Women Voters convention, December 1920. Council member in "The Deacon's Awakening," 1921.
<b>Madam Birdie High, Madam H. High</b> <i>Henry High, waiter</i> 674 St. Anthony Avenue	Member or delegate at Minnesota State Suffrage Association convention, 1916. Council member in "The Deacon's Awakening," 1921.
<b>Madam W. G. Hood</b> <i>William G. Wood, waiter, helper</i> 700 Sherburne Avenue (1916-1917) 674 St. Anthony Avenue (1920)	Member or delegate at Minnesota State Suffrage Association convention, 1916. Attended luncheon of the Minnesota State Suffrage Association, 1917. Applauded in <i>St. Paul Daily News</i> and <i>The Appeal</i> for work in securing Republican nomination. Council member in "The Deacon's Awakening," 1921.
<b>Mrs. W. V. Howard</b> <i>W. V. Howard, barber</i> 767 Rondo Avenue	Member or delegate at Minnesota State Suffrage Association convention, 1916. Delegate to Minnesota State Suffrage Association, 1917. Council member in "The Deacon's Awakening," 1921.
<b>Madam Eula Hunter</b> <i>Widow</i> 782 St. Anthony Avenue	Member or delegate at Minnesota State Suffrage Association convention, 1916.
<b>Madam E. Irvin, Ross Ree Irvin</b> <b>Mrs. Edward [E]rvin, Ervine</b> <i>Edward Ervin, salesman</i> 608 St. Anthony Avenue <i>J. Lewis Irvin, attorney</i>	Member or delegate at Minnesota State Suffrage Association convention, 1916. Attended luncheon of the Minnesota State Suffrage Association, 1917. Applauded in <i>St. Paul Daily News</i> and <i>The Appeal</i> for work in securing Republican nomination. Secretary, Everywoman Progressive Council, 1920-1921.
<b>Madam Natalie Irvin</b>	Council member in "The Deacon's Awakening," 1921.
<b>Madam C. E. James</b> <i>C. E. James, organizer</i> 632 W. Central Avenue	Council member in "The Deacon's Awakening," 1921.
<b>Madam Henrietta James</b> <i>George James, massage</i> 638 St. Anthony Avenue	Applauded in <i>St. Paul Daily News</i> and <i>The Appeal</i> for work in securing Republican nomination. Council member in "The Deacon's Awakening," 1921.
<b>Madam Gladys James</b>	Council member in "The Deacon's Awakening," 1921.
<b>Mrs. Lucille James</b> <i>Possibly single, clerk</i>	Applauded in <i>St. Paul Daily News</i> and <i>The Appeal</i> for work in securing Republican nomination. Actor in "The Deacon's Awakening," 1921.
<b>Mrs. J. E. Johns</b> <i>J. Johns, waiter</i> 258 St. Anthony Avenue	Vice President, Suffrage Club, 1914.
<b>Mrs. C. D. Jones</b> <i>Possibly Charles D. Jones, washer</i> 254 W. Fourth Street	Election Day Ballot Judge, 1920. Applauded in <i>St. Paul Daily News</i> and <i>The Appeal</i> for work in securing Republican nomination.
<b>Madam Nanette Jones, Naunette Jones</b> <i>Mrs. C. D. Jones above?</i>	Everywoman Progressive Council representative at the League of Women Voters convention, December 1920. Council member in "The Deacon's Awakening," 1921.
<b>Mrs. A. W. Jordan</b> <i>Alex W. Jordan, porter, Pullman Co.</i> 791 Rondo Avenue	Council member in "The Deacon's Awakening," 1921. Applauded in <i>St. Paul Daily News</i> and <i>The Appeal</i> for work in securing Republican nomination.

<b>Madam George H. Lucas, Mrs. Bessie Lucas</b> <i>George H. Lucas, porter, Pullman Co.</i> 642 Rondo Avenue	Applauded in <i>St. Paul Daily News</i> and <i>The Appeal</i> for work in securing Republican nomination. Council member in "The Deacon's Awakening," 1921.
<b>Madam May Black Mason</b> <i>Possibly single, assistant, Guiterman Bros.</i> Room on W. Summit Avenue	Council member in "The Deacon's Awakening," 1921.
<b>Mrs. S. L. Maxwell</b> <i>Stephen L. Maxwell</i> 1559 Roblyn Ave	Secretary, Suffrage Club, 1914.
<b>Mrs. Florence McGavock</b> <i>Aaron J. McGavock, porter</i> 590 W. Central Avenue	Everywoman Progressive Council representative at the League of Women Voters convention, December 1920. Actor in "The Deacon's Awakening," 1921.
<b>Miss Lillian McKnight</b>	Applauded in <i>St. Paul Daily News</i> and <i>The Appeal</i> for work in securing Republican nomination.
<b>Mrs. Bessie Miller</b> <i>Possibly single, clerk, GN Shops</i> <i>Possibly mother of C. H. Miller below</i>	Everywoman Progressive Council representative at the League of Women Voters convention, December 1920. Actor in "The Deacon's Awakening," 1921.
<b>Madam C. H. Miller</b> <i>C. H. Miller, janitor/helper</i> 428 Edmund Avenue 744 Juno Avenue	Attended luncheon of the Minnesota State Suffrage Association, 1917. Applauded in <i>St. Paul Daily News</i> and <i>The Appeal</i> for work in securing Republican nomination.
<b>Mrs. B. N. Murrell</b> <i>Rev. Benjamin N. Murrell</i> 716 Rondo Avenue	Delegate to Minnesota State Suffrage Association, 1917.
<b>Mrs. Catherine Tandy</b>	Actor in "The Deacon's Awakening," 1921.
<b>Mrs. W. B. Tandy</b> <i>W. B. Tandy, butler</i> 565 Rondo Avenue	Member or delegate at Minnesota State Suffrage Association convention, 1916. Delegate to Minnesota State Suffrage Association, 1917. Council member in "The Deacon's Awakening," 1921.
<b>Madam Kelly Turner</b> <i>Kelly Turner, machinist, Municipal Garage</i> 935 St. Anthony Avenue	Applauded in <i>St. Paul Daily News</i> and <i>The Appeal</i> for work in securing Republican nomination. Council member in "The Deacon's Awakening," 1921.
<b>Mrs. F. A. Scott, Madam Leathe Scott</b> <i>Foster A. or Frank A. Scott</i> 556 W. Central Avenue	Attended luncheon of the Minnesota Suffrage Association, 1917. Council member in "The Deacon's Awakening," 1921.
<b>Madam Nellie Seay</b> <i>Nellie Francis's visiting grandmother</i>	Council member in "The Deacon's Awakening," 1921.
<b>Mrs. C. L. Sharpe, Mrs. Mildred Sharpe</b> 521 Rondo Avenue	Member or delegate at Minnesota State Suffrage Association convention, 1916. Everywoman Progressive Council representative at the League of Women Voters convention, December 1920. Council member in "The Deacon's Awakening," 1921.
<b>Madam Elenora Smith</b>	Council member in "The Deacon's Awakening," 1921.
<b>Madam Ella Smith</b> <i>Ella G., stenographer or Ella L., clerk</i>	Council member in "The Deacon's Awakening," 1921.
<b>Mrs. Lucille Smith</b>	Actor in "The Deacon's Awakening," 1921.
<b>Madam W. B. Walker</b> <i>William, driver</i> 1098 S. Robert	Member or delegate at Minnesota State Suffrage Association convention, 1916. Applauded in <i>St. Paul Daily News</i> and <i>The Appeal</i> for work in securing Republican nomination.
<b>Madam Edward Williams</b>	Applauded in <i>St. Paul Daily News</i> and <i>The Appeal</i> for work in securing Republican nomination.
<b>Madam G. Wills</b> <i>Geo. O. Wills, packer</i> 491 E. Belvidere or <i>Geo. W. Wills, clerk</i> 1004 Iglehart Avenue	Member or delegate at Minnesota State Suffrage Association convention, 1916.
<b>Madam S. Wright, Madam Sam'l Wright, Mary Wright</b> <i>Samuel W. Walker, waiter</i> 349 N Avon Street	Member or delegate at Minnesota State Suffrage Association convention, 1916. Council member in "The Deacon's Awakening," 1921. Treasurer, Everywoman Progressive Council, 1920-1921.

**Note:** Names were obtained from articles in *The Twin City Star* and *The Appeal* 1914-1922 and are listed as they appeared. Husbands and their professions (in italics) come from the St. Paul City Directories, as do addresses. This list of women is likely incomplete.

**R.C.H.S.**  
RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Perrie Jones in the early 1940s around the time she stepped into the role of city librarian. Her presence and the ideas and changes she brought to the table still positively impact the Saint Paul Public Library System today. (See "The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library Celebrate Seventy-Five Years: Honoring Perrie Jones, The Librarian at the Center of It All" by Mark Taylor beginning on page 24.) *Courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society.*