

## AUTHOR INTERVIEW

Interviewer: Manfred Lim

Interviewee: Tina Cassidy



Tina Cassidy is an author who writes about women and culture. She has written many books, including *Mr. President*, *How Long Must We Wait* and *Fight for the Right to Vote*. She is also a former journalist, she spent most of her career at the Boston Globe. Her topics covered business, fashion and politics and was Chief Marketing Officer of GBH. Cassidy also serves on the board of The Conversation US.

### **WOULD YOU CONSIDER ALICE PAUL AS A WELL KNOWN FIGURE IN HISTORY? (COMPARED TO OTHER WOMEN FIGURES LIKE LUCY BURNS.)**

While Alice Paul might be well known compared with other women such as Lucy Burns. I think she is still relatively unknown as part of our popular history. Part of the reason for that is that she was written out of the success of the 19th Amendment by the other suffrage faction that went on to found the League of Women Voters, as well as the fact that Alice Paul never tried to bring attention to herself; she was all about the work instead. In addition to those factors, voting rights for women -- and people of color -- has not been a part of the national narrative we teach our children in history class. It's time for that to change.

### **WHAT DO YOU THINK, OUT OF EVERYTHING ALICE PAUL DID, HAD THE BIGGEST IMPACT ON THE MOVEMENT?**

Her strategy had the biggest impact. By that I mean that she realized that the old way of fighting for votes for women -- asking each state to approve that at the local level -- would not work everywhere, especially in the South. So instead, she promoted the idea of a federal amendment, which would, in

theory, cover every state. That approach, combined with her highly visible, creative, peaceful and unrelenting protest changed public opinion in the span of 8 years.

### **IF YOU WERE ALICE PAUL, WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE DONE DIFFERENTLY IN HER LIFETIME?**

Worked harder to ensure that voting rights for African American would not be taken away by state-level tactics such as poll taxes, literacy tests and gerrymandering; and that Native and Chinese Americans were included in the expansion of voting rights that she worked hard to win. Native Americans were not considered citizens, so they could not vote. And the Chinese were excluded under an act of Congress called the Chinese Exclusion Act.

### **WHAT IS ONE THING YOU KNOW ABOUT HER THAT OTHER PEOPLE WOULDN'T KNOW?**

That she died poor and alone and had multiple graduate degrees.

### **WHAT IS THE MOST INTERESTING THING YOU FIND ABOUT HER?**

That even after the 19th Amendment was ratified, two years later she wrote the Equal Rights Amendment, which could become part of our Constitution during the current administration.

### **DO YOU BELIEVE THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT SHOULD BE SUPPORTED?**

Yes. The word "woman/women" exists nowhere in the Constitution. Also, what is objectionable about what the ERA calls for? It's full text reads: "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex. Section 2: The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article."

### **WHY DID YOU WRITE ABOUT THE WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT?**

Because it's a relatively untold story and we need to understand our imperfect history in order to make it more perfect. Plus, there are many lessons for today.

### **DO YOU BELIEVE SCHOOLS TEACH ENOUGH INFORMATION ABOUT THE WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT?**

No. I was never taught anything about suffrage during high school or college.

## **BELMONT-PAUL NATIONAL PARK INTERVIEW**

Interviewer: Manfred Lim

Interviewee: Susan Philpott



Susan Philpott is a park ranger, working at the national park, Belmont-Paul National Park. She has a master degree in history and studied the Black Freedom Struggle. She has always had a passion when it comes to the topic of equality between sexes. She devotes her time, teaching the importance of topics that aren't as well known.

### **WHO DO YOU THINK HAD THE BIGGEST IMPACT ON THE WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT?**

Alice Paul was always referring back to Susan B. Anthony. Alice Paul looked up to Susan B. Anthony as her role model and said she was doing her work in the spirit of what Susan B. Anthony started. This was upsetting to some of the other suffragist leaders who knew Susan B. Anthony and didn't think Alice Paul's tactics matched with what they knew of Susan B. Anthony. They also looked up to Elizabeth Katie Stanton who was the philosopher of the movement. Susan B. Anthony was on the ground fighting all the time and inspired the next generations. Elizabeth Katie Stanton provided Susan B. Anthony with the philosophical framework for what they were fighting for.

### **WOULD YOU CONSIDER ALICE PAUL AS A WELL KNOWN FIGURE IN HISTORY? (COMPARED TO OTHER WOMEN FIGURES LIKE LUCY BURNS.)**

She is not, the hundredth anniversary of the 19th amendment that has happened in 2020 made Alice Paul more prominent. We at Belmont Paul National Park are doing our best to get the word out but for a long time, most people had not heard of Alice Paul.

## **WHAT DO YOU THINK, OUT OF EVERYTHING ALICE PAUL DID, HAD THE BIGGEST IMPACT ON THE MOVEMENT?**

Alice Paul's political savvy had the biggest impact, her ability to work all the angles. She got attention and got people talking with the picketing of the White House as well as the 1913 parade procession. All the other stuff that is going on, just a marker, just a protest doesn't make a change, their lobbying campaigns, petition, publicity stunts, keeping issues in the public made a difference.

## **IF YOU WERE ALICE PAUL, WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE DONE DIFFERENTLY IN HER LIFETIME?**

I couldn't act like Alice Paul since I didn't have the courage that she possessed. Alice Paul saw the movement as a white women's movement, and didn't see the issues that other women of different races had. If I was Alice Paul, I would definitely partner up with people of different races to protest women equality.

## **WHAT IS ONE THING YOU KNOW ABOUT HER THAT OTHER PEOPLE WOULDN'T KNOW?**

When Alice Paul was going to graduate school in England, she joined with the British suffragists. While participating in protests, she became famous in the United States, she was all over the news. When Alice Paul returned to the US, reporters were waiting for her, hoping for an interview. Her publicity was recognized by other suffragists leaders and they were happy she was working with the movement.

## **WHAT IS THE MOST INTERESTING THING YOU FIND ABOUT HER?**

Alice Paul was so single minded about the issue of equality. If you were to interview her, she would talk about the movement's history but would ask you to support the movement in some way.

**DO YOU BELIEVE SCHOOLS TEACH ENOUGH INFORMATION ABOUT THE WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE  
MOVEMENT?**

No, I have trouble getting, or approaching teachers telling them that the Women's Suffrage movement is something they should be interested in. The topic is not in the teaching standards and is often lumped in with progressive era. The Women's Suffrage movement should be taught, including all problematic parts of it.