For more than a half century, supporters of equal suffrage in Kansas adopted a variety of tactics and waged several major campaigns on their road to victory in November 1912. Suffragists learned from their mistakes, and according to historian Kristi Lowenthal, author of “The Equal Rights Amendment and the Persistence of Kansas Conservatism,” they took “advantage of increasingly favorable economic times and growing independence.” By the second decade of the twentieth century, “women had more time and money to conduct the campaign. The automobile allowed suffragists to stump in far-flung places and in a greater number of locales.” But perhaps most significantly, Kansas activists took “a softer [more conservative] stance than in previous campaigns. . . . Kansas suffragists withdrew from the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA), home of the most radical suffragists, and asked them to refrain from sending any workers unless they were specifically requested.” Arguably, this last Kansas “Votes for Women” campaign benefited from the removal of these outside influences and agitators who had been quite visible in state campaigns past. This time around the proposed state constitutional amendment passed with 175,246 votes for and 159,197 votes against it.

Pictured here are a few members of the Douglas County Equal Suffrage League, identified as Mrs. Paul R. Brooks, the league’s first president; Mrs. Frank Strong, the league’s first vice president and wife of the University of Kansas chancellor; Miss Florence Payne, former president of the college league; and Marcella Chalkley and Dorothy Williston. With their driver, Clement Perkins, seated behind the steering wheel on the right, the suffragists participated in an automobile parade at the county fair, most likely on September 27, 1912. Automobiles were still something of a novelty, and the Lawrence Daily Journal-World billed this as “the best automobile display ever seen in Lawrence.” Automobile day at the fair, which featured the parade and races, attracted a record crowd and no doubt good exposers for the suffragists (see Kansas Memory, www.kansasmemory.org/locate.php?query=207949).
The Children of Abraham and Hannah: Grocer, Doctor, Entrepreneur: The Summerfields of Lawrence, Kansas
by David M. Katzman

Child Custody, Custodial Arrangements and Financial Support in Late Nineteenth-Century Kansas
by Lyn Ellen Bennett

The Equal Rights Amendment and the Persistence of Kansas Conservatism
by Kristi Lowenthal

Reviews

Book Notes
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