

Ventura County Commission for Women

MARCH 1987

THE HERITAGE OF ALICE PAUL

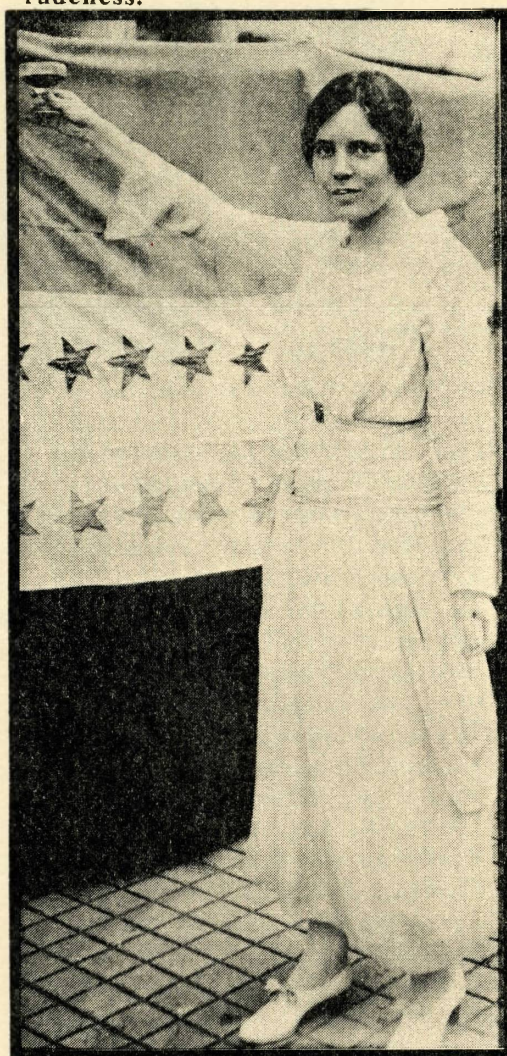
Alice Paul was born in January of 1885 in Moorestown, N.J. Her parents were well-to-do, middle-class Quakers whose lives were actively informed by the moral and humane principles of the religious sect to which they belonged. In later years when Alice Paul was asked what brought her to feminism, she said that it had always been there -- in her home, in her young life. She grew up with the assumption that men and women were equal, and only when she went out into the larger world did she discover this was not so.

In 1905 she began working as a social worker in New York, and from there went to London where she met the Pankhurst sisters, who were leaders of the suffragist movement in England.

She returned to America in 1910 to work on the American suffragist movement, which had all but died. But Alice Paul wasn't ready to quit.

She proved to be an extraordinary organizer, fund-raiser and politician. She permitted nothing into her life or her consciousness that did not have a direct bearing on suffrage. She lived in a cold room so she wouldn't be

tempted to read novels late at night. She worked for months at a time without removing her hat. Her manner was so intent, so direct, that it was often experienced as abominable rudeness.



Alice Paul organized massive demonstrations, disruptions at meetings, rallies, and functions of all kinds. Hers were the first suffragists ever to picket the White House. She and her followers got arrested, went to jail, hunger-struck, were force-fed, made front pages across the country -- and gained consistently growing attention and sympathy.

In 1923, three years after suffrage was granted, Alice Paul and the Woman's Party drafted the Equal Rights Amendment. For nearly 20 years she was able to keep the issue of the ERA alive before the Congress and before many state legislatures, but with the onset of the World War II, the entire question submerged.

Her life was the vessel into which the necessity of woman's rights was poured. She was the cause itself. And if Alice Paul had not lived, and been exactly what she was, we, the women of America, would not be today exactly what we are.

Article excerpted from Life Magazine special report on Remarkable American Women, 1976. Photo from Women in History Post Card Set #2, Helaine Victoria Press.

ERICA NEVILLE MEMORIAL ALICE PAUL AWARDS

Three Ventura County women have been awarded the second annual Erica Neville Memorial Alice Paul Awards. Sponsored by the Women's History Project of Ventura County, a joint task force of the Ventura County Commission for Women and the Ventura County Women's Equity Coalition, the awards recognize the accomplishments of educators and community activists in furthering interest in women's history in the county.

The awards are named for Alice Paul, one of America's leading twentieth century suffragists and the author of the original text of the Equal Rights Amendment in 1923. The awards are given in honor of Erica Neville, an initiator of the Women's History Project in Ventura County, who died suddenly in January, 1986. Erica Neville adopted Alice Paul as a model and heroine and for several years portrayed the suffragist in Conejo Valley classrooms.

As recipients of the awards, Ginny Connell and Deanna Hackman, (Community Activists) and Jo Ellen Heil, (Educator), have committed themselves to making women's history come alive in Ventura County.

Six years ago, Deanna Hackman sparked the interest of Ventura County residents with the celebration of Women's History Week. Through her tremendous efforts, the groundwork was laid to involve individuals, organizations, educators, school districts, cities, and the county in acknowledging the contributions of women

throughout history. She has been an initiator, promoter, and implementer. Since 1981, Hackman's fervent dedication to, and focus on, the accomplishments and struggles of women have helped people of all ages learn of women's true roles in history.



One of the first members of the Women's Equity Coalition, Hackman worked to raise funds to purchase the film, "How We Got The Vote" for use throughout the county. She has appeared in suffragist costume to present women's history programs in local libraries and in classrooms. She has chaired projects on women's history for local organizations, set up and staffed booths at California Lutheran University's "Creative Options: A Day for Women" and at the Ventura County Superintendent of Schools' Summer Workshop for Teachers for four years.

Her complete commitment has led the way, drawing a greater number of dedicated and talented women and men in to the celebration of Women's History Week. Carolyn Kopp, a friend of Hackman's, said, "Before we begin to acknowledge outstanding efforts of women who are leading Women's History Week projects, we need to first acknowledge and show our gratitude to the women who raised the consciousness of women and agencies in Ventura County, laid the necessary groundwork, and prompted and assisted others in their projects. Deanna is such a woman. To say she is worthy of this award is a tremendous understatement."

Jo Ellen Heil believes the rich heritage of women's history was meant to be shared, and since 1982 she has been doing just that.

"She has done more to spark interest and enthusiasm and actually provide concrete curriculum materials to teachers and students throughout Ventura County than anyone else I have direct contact with," wrote Lyn Perino, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction for the Ventura County Superintendent of Schools Office.

Through her work with the Ventura County superintendent of Schools Office during the past five years, Heil has developed curriculum materials for use in the classrooms and made Women's History a very visible and practical part of the curriculum.

Her presentations to schools throughout Ventura County have included such topics as pioneer women, Eleanor Roosevelt, first ladies, native American women, the women of the Revolutionary War, women who fought in the Civil War and in the West.

With a bachelor's degree in history and a master's degree in history and anthropology, Heil considers her lecture series a great opportunity for herself and others to learn. "I joy in sharing the rich heritage of Women's History with people of all ages through lecturing and writing."
(no photo available)

Ginny Connell's devotion to women's history projects exemplifies the spirit of the Erica Neville Memorial Alice Paul Award. Her energy and commitment have provided the impetus for on-going women's history programs in Ventura County.

As a member of the Ventura County Commission for Women and the Ventura County Women's Equity Coalition, Connell has been instrumental in developing interest in women's history programs for both school and community groups.

Since her association with the Women's Equity Coalition, she has dedicated herself to incorporating women's history into classroom curriculum through the use of costumed speakers, films, student essay and poster contests.

Connell has helped organize three annual weekend women's history workshops for teachers presented by the National Women's History Project, and California Lutheran University.



In addition, Connell has been instrumental in obtaining city and county proclamations acknowledging Women's History Week in March. In 1986, she arranged a theatrical presentation entitled "Past the Morning Star," by the American Living History Theater at California Lutheran University.

A psychotherapist and community activist, recently she has been appointed to the Ventura County Community College District's Advisory Committee on the Status of Women, and will work with college faculty and students to develop materials and activities for Women's History Month in March.

Thanks to her enthusiasm, women's history projects have grown from non-existent to eagerly anticipated annual events. "Ginny's leadership stimulated and permeated every project we did," Deanna Hackman, a member of the Ventura County Women's Equity Coalition, said.

SALUTE TO WOMEN

Enclosed with your newsletter this month is a nomination form which clearly outlines the selection process for the "Salute to Women" awards. As you know, the Commission will recognize those women who have made an outstanding contribution in one of six areas: the arts, business, community service (there are three sub-division areas for consideration, i.e., women professionally employed in community service; women employed outside the home who volunteer their time in community service; and women who define their work as homemaker, are not employed outside the home, and who participate actively in their community), education, law, media, science/health, and outstanding young woman (ages 18-25).

The selection committee selects the awardee on the basis of the nomination form and letter. Each nominee will be rated using a scale of 1-5 (with 5 being the highest rating) in areas that include the significance of the nominee's contribution, the impact of this contribution, the degree of commitment, community experience, local organization participation, leadership qualities and experience, the degree of challenge, and the extent to which horizons have been broadened for women in the community as a result of your nominee's efforts.

All forms must be postmarked no later than June 15, 1987. Nominations should be mailed to the Ventura County Commission for Women office located at 505 Poli street, Ventura, CA 93001.

FRIENDS

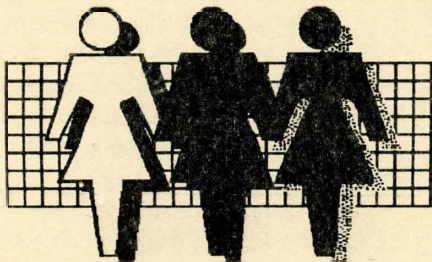
The April meeting of the Directors of the Friends of the Commission for Women will be a general meeting for all Friends members and prospective Friends members interested in getting involved with the annual "Salute To Women" Awards Banquet next fall. The meeting will begin at 7:30 p.m. at the Senior Nutrition Center located at 2220 Ventura Blvd., Camarillo.

For further information contact Lee Anderson at (818) 704-0828.

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**Ventura County
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March 1987

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