The American Magazine

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February 14th, 1910.

Mrs. Margaret VanBuren Raull,

Jersey City, N. J.

My dear Madam:

I have your letter of February 7th and should have answered it before, but I have not been in my office. I am very glad to know at least of one person who has really made a long and exhaustive examination of the matter of woman suffrage in New Jersey. I have looked into it somewhat myself, but certainly have not made a long and exhaustive study. My chief sources of information have been the statutes of New Jersey, the reports of the legislative discussions, and the newspapers of the day. The only paper on the question which I have seen, which inspired my confidence, was by Mr. William A. Whitehead of the New Jersey Historical Society - a paper published in 1858. No doubt you are familiar with it. I never have been able to find anything myself that showed what candidates or what laws women voted for, and I should be very glad if you could refer me to the sources on those points.

As for the very brief general statement which I made in the article in the February number of The American Magazine, here is the explanation. I used the date 1790 purposely. Of course I had before me the original statute passed in 1776, but as near as I could make out from the authorities which I had consulted, there seemed to have been some dispute about whether that law did really apply to women; and the "he or she" clause was not inserted until 1790. I therefore deliberately took the later date as the one about which there could be no dispute.

I believe the question of whether the law applied to married women or not was interpreted differently in different counties - that is, Mr. Whitehead so contends, and as I have said, he seemed to me the most trustworthy authority that I came across.

As to my statement that women made nothing of it, I think the fact that the law was repealed, without, so far as I can find out, any organized opposition to its repeal from the women, showed that they really made nothing of it. I believe that it has been pretty well conceded, too, that what suffrage rights were allowed in early times in France and in England, and I believe, in a degree in the New England colonies, never came to anything - that is, it seems

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M. V. R.

to have been a little bit as the school suffrage is in some parts of this country today, practically a dead letter.

I assure you, my dear madam, that all I want in this matter is to get the exact truth; anything else does not interest me in the least.

Thanking you again for your letter, believe me,

Very sincerely yours,

Ida M. Tarbell

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