

# THE 1866 SUFFRAGE PETITION IN EAST ANGLIA

Although in small numbers, women from all areas of the country signed the 1866 suffrage petition. Out of approximately 1,500 women who signed, 57 were from East Anglia including 16 from Ipswich and 20 from Aldeburgh, the home town of Elizabeth Garret Anderson, one of the women who helped start the petition.

## THE SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT IN EAST ANGLIA

Norwich hosted a large number of suffrage related events. In 1880, Lydia Becker, an early leader in the movement, addressed an audience of over 3000 in St Andrews Hall in the centre of the city. Ipswich was also a hub in the East of England for suffrage meetings and demonstrations, and both cities established suffragist and suffragette branches. Suffragettes from East Anglia often travelled to London and some were even imprisoned for their suffrage activity, such as Violet Aitken from Norwich.



**57**  
women  
signed  
from east  
anglia

**ACTIVITY 1**

Use the sources and your own knowledge to answer the questions.

**Source 1**

*"Tuesday, March 5 1912 – she [Violet] has been again arrested and this time for breaking plate glass windows, I am overwhelmed with shame and distress to think that a daughter of mine should do anything so wicked..."*

Extract from the diary of the father of Violet Aitken, a suffragette from Norwich.

**Q: What can source 1 tell us about the social pressures some women would have faced when they were campaigning? How do you think these attitudes might have affected a woman's choice to campaign?**

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**Source 2**

A poster from 1913 promoting the suffragist campaign groups: The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies.

**Q: Analyse the suffragist poster and describe three things it suggests about the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies.**

1. 

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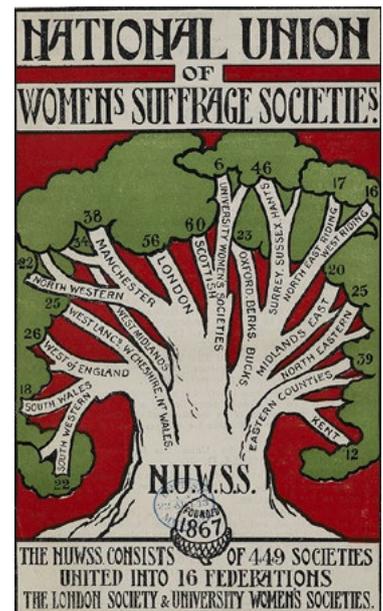
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2. 

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3. 

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**Source 3**

Victorian train, 1890



**Q: Source 3 shows a typical Victorian train. Norwich was known for its Victoria Station. How do you think the introduction of railways might have impacted the campaign for women's suffrage?**

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**Source 4**

Suffragettes campaigning in Tower Street, Ipswich.



**Q: Source 4 shows women in Ipswich campaigning for the release of women being held in prison. Look at the image, how do you think this style of campaigning would have impacted local opinion about the women's cause?**

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**ACTIVITY 2**

Mary Clodd was one of the women from East Anglia who signed the petition in 1866. Using the information about her and the prompts provided, write a speech from Mary's perspective. Imagine you are at a suffragist meeting in 1910. Make the case for women to have the right to vote but also to use non-violent campaign tactics

**Biography of Mary Clodd (1834-1923), Suffolk–1866 suffrage petition signee**

Mary Clodd was one of the women who signed the 1866 suffrage petition. She was born in 1834 in the small Suffolk town of Framlingham. Her father, George, was a Tailor and Draper – someone who made clothes and sold fabrics.

Sources suggest that Mary's family shared her support for women's suffrage. Her mother and sister both signed the petition. Her brother-in-law, James Larnier, was a champion of political freedom and an advocate of a variety of social movements - he even campaigned for a ban of alcohol and was an early advocate of vegetarianism.

In 1871 James chaired a suffrage meeting in Framlingham, supported on the platform by Mary. Millicent Fawcett, who went on to lead the suffragists, also spoke at the meeting.

In her later years Mary Clodd moved to Devon and at the age of 79 she served as the secretary to her local suffragist society. She chose to concentrate her efforts on Millicent Fawcett's suffragists rather than the Pankhursts' suffragettes. Mary Clodd identified with the suffragists and believed in change through peaceful protest such as marches and petitions.

She was one of the few women who signed the 1866 petition and also lived to see the Representation of the People Act passed in 1918. This Act of Parliament gave the vote for the first time to women over the age of 30 who met minimum property qualifications.



**I urge you to follow in the footsteps of my great idol, Millicent Fawcett, by...**

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**Our differences with the Suffragettes do not make them our opponents. We are both fighting for the same goal, we differ only in our strategy. The benefits of non-violent campaign tactics are...**

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**Thank you for listening**

### List of sources

**Source 1** – Extract from the diary of the father of Violet Aitken, a suffragette from Norwich – Diary held in the Norwich Record Office (MC 2165/1/23, 976X4)

**Source 2** – National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies Poster showing the reach of its organisation across the country – Image courtesy of the London School of Economics.

**Source 3** – Victorian train, 1890 – Image courtesy of the National Archives.

**Source 4** – Suffragettes campaigning in Tower Street, Ipswich, for the release of fellow campaigners – Image courtesy of the London School of Economics.