

In Commemoration of the Suffrage Centennial ...

Plainville Women Leading the Way

100 Years of Local Women
in Politics and Government



Part 1

WOMEN VOTE

Connecticut Suffrage Centennial

A Virtual Exhibit by Rosemary Morante

Plainville Historical Society

August 2020

Plainville Women Leading the Way

The 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution was ratified in 1920. The amendment granted U.S. women the full right to vote. As a result, women not only voted but also became increasingly involved in politics and government through various ways including running for office.

In our **Connecticut Women and the Right to Vote** virtual exhibit, we told the story of the state's long struggle for suffrage while also tracing Plainville connections to these events. In this virtual exhibit, we focus just on Plainville and tell the story of the many women in our town who have impacted public policy since 1920.

We hope that you will enjoy learning about the role of local women "leading the way" for the past 100 years!



WOMEN VOTE

Connecticut Suffrage Centennial

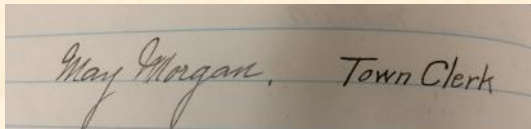
1920's-1940's: Two Women Elected as Town Clerk

May Morgan

It took very little time after the 19th Amendment for a Plainville woman to be elected to a major town office. In the early 1920's, May Morgan of Park Street was voted in as Town Clerk which was then an elective office. She was one of the first women Town Clerks in the state. May Morgan held the position for five years 1922-1927.

Town Clerk was an extremely important full-time position at Town Hall. You can see it listed here right at the top of a page from the town's 1922-23 Annual Report.

Unfortunately, we have not been able to locate a photograph of May Morgan. However, here is her signature which certainly appeared on many town documents during her tenure as Town Clerk.

A photograph of a handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "May Morgan, Town Clerk". The signature is written on a piece of lined paper.

Mary Royce

A second woman Mary Royce was elected as Town Clerk in 1933. She was endorsed by both parties. Mary was re-elected a number of times and served until 1940. A newspaper article from the time noted that she was recognized for her extensive knowledge and was often consulted by the Selectmen and others.

OFFICERS OF THE TOWN OF PLAINVILLE.		
1922—1923.		
TOWN CLERK.		
Miss May Morgan.		
SELECTMEN.		
William J. Johnson	Charles H. Calor	Edward P. Prior
TREASURER.		
Charles W. Hird		
TAX COLLECTOR.		
Willis J. Hemingway		
ASSESSORS.		
O. H. Robertson	S. P. Williams	W. J. Simpson
BOARD OF RELIEF.		
A. H. Condell	J. N. McKernan	Walter Seymour
REGISTRARS.		
J. N. McKernan	Peter Duffy	
GRAND JURORS.		
William J. Foran	Stanley S. Gwillim	Schuyler P. Williams
JUSTICES OF THE PEACE.		
L. S. Mills	Merritt O. Ryder	William Cunningham
Frederick S. Bullen	Edward P. Prior	
PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER.		
Dr. J. N. Bull.		
AUDITORS.		
F. L. Benzon	Thomas Prior	
DOG WARDEN.		
George E. Shubert		
SCHOOL COMMITTEE.		
Lewis S. Mills	Joseph T. McCarthy	Frederick Bullen
William L. Cafferty	Edwin H. Hills	Mrs. Pearl Smith
LIBRARY DIRECTORS.		
Ralph Morrill	H. A. Castle	Miss Helen Brock
Mrs. Henry Trumbull	Ralph L. Seymour	

Images: Taken at Office of the Town Clerk. Town of Plainville.

1920's-1940's: Women Elected to Library Board

A number of women were elected to the Library Board during these early decades.

Helen Brock

One of the first was Helen Brock who went on to serve 28 years on the Board. Helen was one of the Brock sisters originally from South Washington Street. Her sister Monica was a World War I Army Nurse who died while in service.

Helen also served on the Park & Recreation Commission and was very active in the American Legion Auxiliary. In March 1954, the town declared "Helen Brock Day" and honored her with a dinner shown here.

Multiple Women Elected

Others on the Library Board during these years included:

Nettie Trumbull

Maud Trumbull

Mary Drake

Bertha Wheeler

Susan Rooney

Mary Angell

Lena Bridgman

Elizabeth Norton

Local women were also behind the construction of a new Plainville Public Library which was dedicated in 1931. The Women's Club organized efforts for the new building. Especially instrumental in this project was Bertha Wheeler.



The Brock sisters with their mother pre-1920. Helen is fifth from the right and Monica is second from the right.

Image: Plainville Historical Society files.



Dr. Lawrence presents to Miss Helen Brock a citation from the local veterans to the community and the veterans. Looking on are Dr. Lawrence and Frank Chambrello, commander of the American Legion.

**Miss Helen Brock Is Honored
For Her Long Service Here**

Image: The Plainville News.

(The Plainville News is no longer published and it appears that the companies who published it are also no longer in existence. We are including images per fair use criteria.)

1920's-1940's: Two Women Elected to Board of Education

Carrie Smith and Mildred Abell

Elected early in the 1920's was Carrie Smith of Broad Street. At this point, the body was officially called the School Committee. Carrie also had a career as a teacher and librarian in Plainville .

Mildred Abell took office on the Board of Education in 1937 and served into the 1940's. She lived on Linden Street. After serving on the Board of Education, Mildred had a teaching career in the Plainville Schools. She became one of the early teachers of special education. By 1957, she was serving as President of the Connecticut Special Education Association.



Carrie Lauridsen (later Smith) is fourth from the right in this Broad Street School photo. Carrie later taught at Broad Street.

Image: Plainville Historical Society files.



Carrie Smith shown here at an Alumni Day at Central Connecticut State College.

Image: We believe this is a New Britain Herald photo. All Herald images are used courtesy of the New Britain Herald.

1920's-1940's: Two Women Elected Registrars of Voters

Loretta Millerick

Loretta Millerick was elected Democratic Registrar of Voters in 1929 making her the first woman Registrar in town. Loretta was the mother of Gene Millerick who much later served as Plainville's State Representative. She lived on Trumbull Avenue at this time and was also known as a local artist.

Nora Powers

The second woman elected as Registrar was Democrat Nora Powers in the late 1930's into the 1940's. After this time, she was a State Representative and will be featured again later in this exhibit.



Loretta Millerick is second from the left.

Image: Newspaper photo is likely from either The Plainville News or New Britain Herald. If from the latter, it is used courtesy of the New Britain Herald.

Women of the Plainville Town Council 1950's-Present

Prior to this time, the town was governed by a Board of Selectmen to which no women had been elected. During the 1950's, we changed to a Town Council form of local government.

In this part of the exhibit, we will first focus on some of the early women Councilors and then go on to highlight all women who have served on the Council including the three women who have been Chairpersons.

1959: Helen Loy is First Woman on the Town Council



Image: From a Town of Plainville Annual Report

Elected to the Council in 1959, Helen Loy had already served on the Board of Education. An NYU graduate, she had worked in journalism, public relations, and in the Secretary of State's office. She was re-elected to the Town Council in 1961.

In 1962, Helen Loy ran for Secretary of State in Connecticut on the Republican ticket. Her opponent was none other than future Governor Ella Grasso who ultimately won the position.

However, that was not the end of the story of Helen Loy and Ella Grasso. As Governor in 1975, Grasso appointed Helen Loy to the new Freedom of Information Commission. Helen served 10 years and was the second Chairperson of the Commission. She became known as a strong advocate for government transparency with whom Governor Grasso frequently consulted.

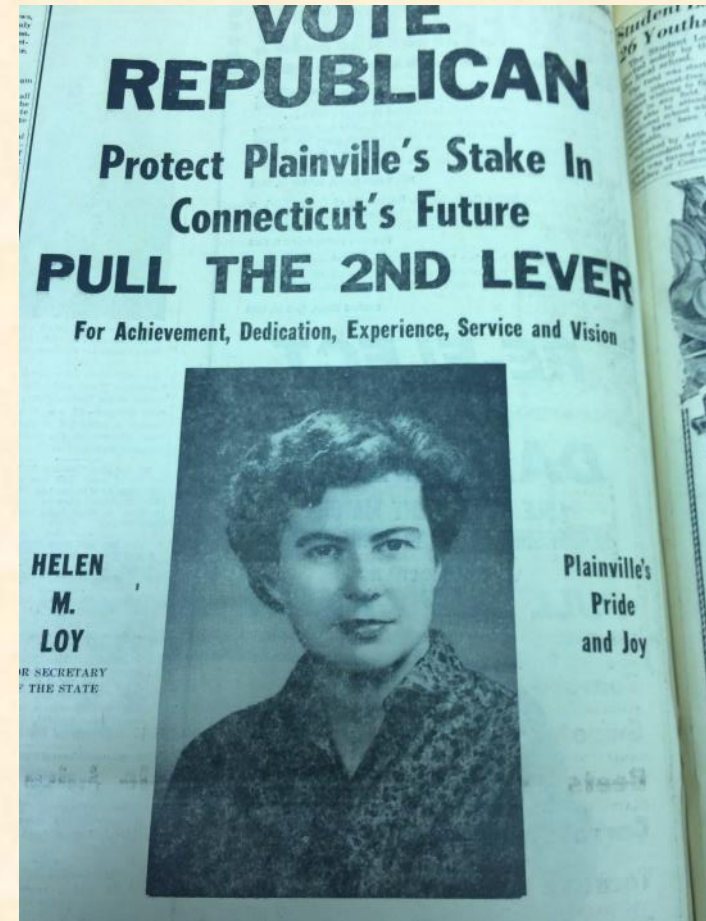
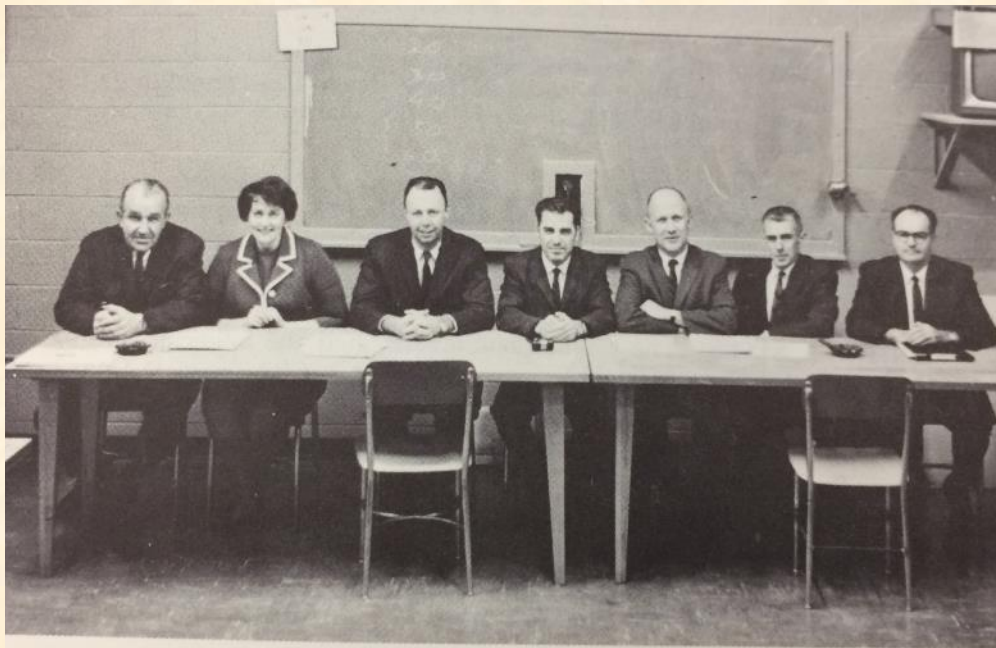


Image: Published as a 1962 political ad in The Plainville News.

1969: Liz Zebrowski is First Woman to Chair Town Council

First elected to the Council in 1967, Liz Zebrowski ran again in 1969 and was the highest vote-getter among Town Council candidates. She was subsequently elected as Chairperson by her male colleagues. One of the biggest projects during Liz Zebrowski's tenure on the Town Council was the planning of the new Municipal Center.



TOWN COUNCIL 1967-68 (left to right) Councilman Paul Mazur, Councilwoman Elizabeth B. Zebrowski, Councilman John A. Hargreaves, Chairman Joseph M. Pugliese, Vice Chairman Frederick O. Hoerle, Councilman Richard O. Thayer and Councilman Chester A. Sutherland.

Image: From a Town of Plainville Annual Report.



Image: From a Town of Plainville Annual Report.



Image. Plainville Historical Society files.

PLAINVILLE TOWN COUNCIL: seated- Paul Mazur, Elizabeth Zebrowski. Standing- Frederick Hoerle, Harry Appell, Robert Michalik, William Petit, David Koskoff, Joseph DiGiovanni

1977: Helen Bullard Elected to Town Council

In 1977, Helen Bullard was the third woman elected to the Plainville Town Council. She served three terms.



Image: From Council photo. Town of Plainville.

People make government tick, says council member

PLAINVILLE — "The Town Council-Town Manager form of government is as good as the people involved in the governmental process make it," commented Town Council member Helen Bullard after serving on the governing body for five years.

Mrs. Bullard's comment came as part of her formal announcement that she will not seek reelection in November.

June 26 will mark her fifth year on the council and



HELEN BULLARD
Served five years

"These dedicated indivi-

Image: Believed to be from the New Britain Herald. All Herald images are used courtesy of the New Britain Herald.

And a new era begins...

Women have been on every Plainville Town Council since Helen Bullard's election in 1977.

Meet all of these women on the following pages.

All images on the following pages are either from an Annual Report of the town or an official Town Council photo taken by the town.



**Plainville Town Council
Elected November 3, 1981**

Joseph A. Toner Val Dumais Charles J. Petit Daniel E. Dougherty
Joan R. St. Pierre Edgar A. Wynkoop Helen M. Bullard

Joan St. Pierre joined Helen Bullard on the Council in 1981.

TOWN COUNCIL



Jackie Landon and Cheryl Richards were the next two women elected to the Council.

Jackie Landon is seated on the left and Cheryl Richards is seated on the right.



Cara M. Smith

***Cara Smith
Elected 1987***

An Historical Note:

Cara's grandmother was Carrie Smith, a member of the Plainville School Committee in the 1920's. She was included earlier in the exhibit.



Plainville Town Council Elected November 7, 1989

**Richard R. Mitera Robert N. Rovost Daniel P. Ciesielski
Charles J. Petit Elizabeth A. Boukus Thomas W. Warnat Robert P. Cornis**

Betty Boukus was elected to her first term in 1989.



Plainville Town Council Elected November 2, 1993

**Kevin M. Neary Richard R. Mitera Donald R. St. Pierre James Stua
Katherine M. Pugliese Elizabeth A. Boukus Robert N. Provost**

*Betty was the lone woman on the
Council for two terms but in 1993, she was joined by Kathy Pugliese.*



**Plainville Town Council
Elected November 7, 1995**

**Robert P. Cornish Kevin M. Neary Robert J. Warnat James R. Stuart
William A. Petit Helen B. Bergenty Katherine M. Pugliese**

In 1995, Helen Bergenty was elected to her first Council term.



**Plainville Town Council
June 1999**

**Helen Bergenty Thomas Arcari Christopher Wazorko James Stuart
Katherine Pugliese William Petit Irene Furman**

In 1999, Irene "Bunny" Furman joined Kathy and Helen as a member of the Town Council.



**Plainville Town Council
Elected November 8, 1999**

**Thomas Arcari Helen Bergenty James Stuart Christopher Wazorko
Lynda Prigodich William Petit Irene Furman**

Lynda Prigodich was elected in 1999.



**Plainville Town Council
Elected November 6, 2001**

Robert A. Michalik, Jr. Katherine Pugliese Johanna Chapman James Stuart
Helen Bergenty Christopher Wazorko Irene Furman

*In 2001, Hannah Petit Chapman was elected to her first term.
Another first for the Town Council:
Women are the majority for the first time!*



**Plainville Town Council
Elected November 8, 2005**

**Robert B. Ciotto Robert A. Michalik, Jr Kirby C. Deegan Johanna Petit Chapman
Lynn M. Szach Christopher J. Wazorko Helen Bergenty**

In 2005, Lynn Szach is elected to her first term.



**Plainville Town Council
Elected November 3, 2011**

**Daniel F. Hurley Scott D. Saunders Christopher J. Wazorko Rick Drezek
Lee Toffey Katherine M. Pugliese Quinn E. Christopher**

*Two new women members elected in 2011:
Lee Toffey and Quinn Wazorko Christopher.*



**Plainville Town Council
Elected November 5, 2013**

**Danny B. Carrier Scott D. Saunders Patrick M. Kilby Christopher J. Wazorko
Deborah J. Tompkins Katherine M. Pugliese Quinn E. Christopher**

2013: Deb Tompkins is elected to her first term.



Plainville Town Council Elected November 3, 2015

**Danny B. Carrier Scott D. Saunders Christopher J. Wazorko
Deborah J. Tompkins Katherine M. Pugliese Quinn E. Christopher Rosemary Morante**

*2015: Rosemary Morante joins Kathy, Deb, and Quinn on the Council.
It is the second Town Council with a majority of women.*

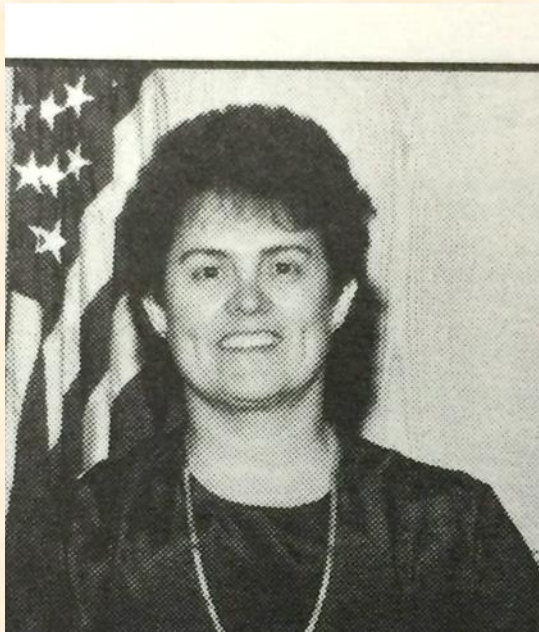


**Plainville Town Council
Elected November 7, 2017**

Scott D. Saunders Ty Cox Jesse Gnazzo Christopher J. Wazorko
Deborah J. Tompkins Katherine M. Pugliese Rosemary Morante

Deb Tompkins, Kathy Pugliese, and Rosemary Morante were re-elected in 2017 and 2019. They are the three women currently serving on the Plainville Town Council.

Three More Women Have Chaired the Council Since the 1970's



Betty Boukus was elected to three Town Council terms. She served as Chairperson in the early 1990's before going on to become State Representative. (More on that in the last part of the exhibit.)



Helen Bergenty is our second longest serving woman Town Councilor. She was elected to seven terms and was elected as Chairperson for two of those terms. Helen continues to serve the Town of Plainville today as a member of the Economic Development Agency.



Kathy Pugliese is our longest serving woman Town Councilor. With her re-election in 2019, she has now been on the town's governing body for twenty years. Kathy is currently in her fifth term as Chairperson of the Plainville Town Council.