

# DR. MARY WALKER'S VOTE

©2017 OSWEGO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY 135 EAST THIRD STREET OSWEGO, NY 13126

## **Dr. Mary Walker's Vote.**

At the polls of the first election district in Oswego Town, last Tuesday, Dr. Mary Walker stepped up and offered her vote.

The inspectors said that she was not a legally qualified voter and they could not receive the ballot.

She insisted on her right to vote, and the oath respecting the qualification of the voter being read to her, she said: "I'll take that oath; I am a fe-male citizen and therefore a male citizen." Some say that she said, "I am a free male citizen," but that could hardly be.

The inspectors refused to receive her vote and she warned them that she should commence proceedings against them.

Some pert young fellow in the crowd said if she was going to vote, they might as well dress up all their women folks in men's clothes and bring them down and vote them.

"I don't wear men's clothes," retorted Dr. Walker, sharply; "I wear my own clothes."

We don't know which ticket Dr. Walker would have voted, but presume she is a Hancock man.

## **Dr. Mary Walker's Vote.**

At the polls of the first election district in Oswego Town, last Tuesday, Dr. Mary Walker stepped up and offered her vote.

The inspectors said that she was not a legally qualified voter and they could not receive the ballot.

She insisted on her right to vote, and the oath respecting the qualification of the voter read to her, she said: "I'll take that oath; I am a fe-male citizen and therefore a male citizen." Some say that she said, "I am a free male citizen," but that could hardly be.

The inspectors refused to receive her vote and she warned them that she should commence proceedings against them.

Some pert young fellow in the crowd said if she was going to vote, they might as well dress up all their women folks in men's clothes and bring them down and vote.

"I don't wear men's clothes," retorted Dr. Walker, sharply; "I wear my own clothes."

We don't know which ticket Dr. Walker would have voted, but presume she is a Hancock man.



**Dr. Mary E. Walker**

Photograph in the collection of  
Oswego County Historical Society.

**Questions from the article:**

1. Where did Dr. Mary Walker try to vote?
2. Who stopped her from voting?
3. Why was she prevented from voting?
4. What was she willing to do in order to vote?
5. What was the reason she gave the inspectors that permitted her to vote?
6. What was their response?
7. When she was told she was wearing men's clothing, what was her response?
8. The author of the article presumed she would have voted for whom?

**Questions for further research and discussion:**

1. Who could legally vote in Oswego Town in 1880?
2. How old was Dr. Mary Walker in 1880?
3. What were some of her life experiences up to this year?
4. What was the full oath people would take in order to vote?
5. What does "pert" mean?
6. Who was Hancock?
7. Which political office was Hancock running for?
8. Who was Hancock running against?
9. What was Hancock's political agenda?
10. Why do you think the author of the article thought Dr. Walker would vote for Hancock?
11. How is Dr. Mary Walker portrayed in the article?
12. How would you describe this article compared to today's news stories?