

THE SMITH FAMILY

A nonconforming and affluent family, comprised of the parents and five daughters, were active and influential in both the abolitionist and suffragette movements. The parents, Zephaniah Hollister (1759-1836) and Hannah Hadassah Hickok (1767-1850), encouraged their five daughters, Abby Hadassah (1797-1878), Laurilla Aleroyla (1789-1857), Julia Evelina (1792-1886), Hancy Zephina (1787-1871), and Cyrinthia Sacretia (1788-1864) to pursue the intellectual pursuits they enjoyed. Zephaniah and Hannah didn't want them hampered by gender so they provided them the education of a typical wealthy white man. As a result, each of the women pursued interests in different disciplines including horticulture, music, foreign languages, art, sewing, teaching, needlework, public speaking and writing. They all used their talents to forward the Abolitionist and Suffragette movements, including writing letters, collecting signatures on petitions, and giving speeches. Only one of the sisters, Julia married, and only after the death of all of her sisters.

Upon the death of their father in 1836, the sisters held title to their home known as Kimberly Mansion. From that time until 1873 they continued to pay their taxes despite being unable to vote. As their interest in the suffrage movement increased and after attending the Connecticut Women's Suffrage Association meeting in 1869 they became aware of single women or widows who owned property refusing to pay their taxes in protest for lack of representation. As a result, in 1873 Abby and Julia stopped paying their taxes in protest. The town took seven cows from the elderly women and later illegally sold some of their land for tax payment. The matter of the land was addressed in a lawsuit and the cows were rebought at auction but the case of the "mean tax collector picking on two older ladies" gained national attention. The sisters were believed to represent the spirit of 1776 and Abby and Julia were written up in newspapers across the country.

During this time in an effort to be heard, Abby pulled her wagon up in front of town hall (the present day Historical Society of Glastonbury Museum on the Green) and aired her grievances standing on the back of the wagon in front of a crowd.

Glastonbury was put on the map as a result of the advocacy of two elderly sisters fighting for the right of all women to vote.

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