

Meet the Suffragists of Sonoma County, California!

By Jeanne Robinson

Frances McGaughey Martin and **Sarah Latimer Finley** led Sonoma County in the quest for women's right to vote. Martin was president of the Political Equality Association of Sonoma County and Finley served as press chairman.

Martin, who went by Fannie, rose to prominence in the 1880's when she became the first woman elected to public office in Sonoma County. She served as the County Superintendent of Schools, the only elected office open to women, from 1886 to 1892. After that, Martin "read" the law and was admitted to the California Bar on December 24, 1895. She became the second female lawyer in Sonoma County. **Finley** was a writer and civic leader. She wrote articles and essays for newspapers, magazines, and club papers. Throughout her almost 90 years she advocated for social and civic welfare.

Jennie Colvin was the first woman to register to vote in Sonoma County. She and her husband ran the Alpha boarding house on B Street in Santa Rosa. Colvin was able to register on January 2, 1912 - 8 years before the passage of the 19th Amendment - because California women had secured the right to vote on October 10, 1911.

The first women to vote at the Sonoma County polls in April, 1912 were:

- **Cora Boyes**, wife of the police chief
- **Julia Hankel**, dressmaker
- **Sara Gore**, widow
- **Mary Alice Rafferty**, telephone operator
- **Clothilde Rozas**, wife of an employee of the Petaluma and Santa Rosa Railroad
- **Mary Blanche Mallory**, wife of a doctor