

Note on the Text

The text here is a reproduction of Sylvia Pankhurst's original text, which exists largely as a typescript, with a few handwritten sections. The original text is in the Estelle Sylvia Pankhurst Papers at the International Institute of Social History, in Amsterdam, and can be viewed online: <https://search.socialhistory.org/Record/ARCHo1029>. In my editorial policy, I have endeavoured to reproduce the text as faithfully as possible – both with regard to the manuscript as a historical document and in appreciation of what would have been the author's likely expectations of publication. Therefore, obvious typos have been corrected, variations in spelling have been standardised and a few archaic spellings have been modernised (for example, 'underweigh' has been transcribed as 'underway'). Underlined text in the original has been italicised. Capitalisation of chapter titles has been standardised throughout the text. Where there are words clearly missing in the text, I have added these in brackets to indicate the editor's hand. In the chapter footnotes, {SP} indicates Pankhurst's footnotes in the original text.

Introduction

Katherine Connelly

Passenger number 12 on the SS *Oceanic* which set sail from Southampton to New York on 3 January 1912 was Estelle Sylvia Pankhurst, 29 years old, female, single. Occupation: artist. Immigration officials asked her if she had been to America before, to which she replied she had previously visited a year earlier, as well as asking whether she was a polygamist and whether she was an anarchist, to which she replied no. Asked if she had been to prison, she said yes and added proudly 'twice as a suffragette' – words that were duly entered on the passenger list.¹

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In January 1911, Sylvia Pankhurst undertook a lecture tour of North America which lasted just over three months, and she would return for a second tour of similar length in January 1912. In the course of these tours, she travelled thousands of miles undertaking a frenetic schedule of engagements: 'I travelled almost every night, and spoke once, twice or thrice a day'.² She did all this to tell audiences about the militant suffragettes' struggle for votes for women in Britain, a struggle in which she was an active participant.

Lecture tours provided opportunities to amplify the suffragettes' own story of the campaign as well as a chance to embarrass and put pressure on the British government by winning over crowds in the wider English-speaking world. In Canada, the suffragettes appealed for solidarity for their cause within the British Empire. America, by contrast, allowed access to a self-consciously modern nation. When Sylvia first arrived in America, women already had the right to vote in Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, Idaho and Washington, DC.

During her first tour, Sylvia was promoting the book she was still hastily finishing – *The Suffragette: The History of the Women's Militant Suffrage Movement, 1905–1910*. By the time of her second tour in 1912, the book had been published in Britain and America, making Sylvia one of the first historians of the suffragette movement. Written at a