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## Suffragists of the Month – December

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### *Harriet Burton Laidlaw, December 16*

Harriet Burton Laidlaw of Sands Point, Long Island, was married to banker James Lees Laidlaw, and could have enjoyed a carefree life of luxury and ease. She chose instead to work for suffrage, travelling across the Island and around the region, making speeches and organizing demonstrations and parades.

(Photo at left shows her speaking from her car to crowds in New York City.) One of her most ambitious projects was the torchlight parade, held in November, 9,1912, when she led a contingent of over 20,000 marchers down Fifth Avenue in New York City.

Harriet tried valiantly to enlist the support of President Theodore Roosevelt, who lived in Oyster Bay at his home, Sagamore Hill. She and other suffragists visited him and his wife Edith in 1907 while he was still president, and later in 1917 when he was enjoying life as a private citizen. She must have been quite persuasive, because he eventually became a staunch supporter of the suffrage movement. Find out more about Harriet and her husband, James, in Chapter 8 of my book, *Long Island and the Woman Suffrage Movement*. (Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress.)

### *Edna Buckman Kearns, December 25*

The work of no one suffragist illustrates the effectiveness of a grass roots campaign as well as that of Edna Buckman Kearns. Not only did Edna labor to bring the campaign to all Long Islanders via her work as an editor of the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, but she also passed on the suffrage fervor to her young daughter, Serena, thus

insuring the struggle for political equality for all would be carried on by the next generation. Edna and Serena bravely traveled the dusty roads of Long Island in her renowned suffrage wagon, aptly dubbed the Spirit of 1776, carrying the message to all who would listen. (See photo of wagon, above left.) For more about Edna, visit her granddaughter Marguerite Kearns' wonderful website, [www.suffragewagon.org](http://www.suffragewagon.org), and check out chapter 7 in my book, *Long Island and the Woman Suffrage Movement*. (Photo courtesy of Marguerite Kearns, Suffrage Wagon News Channel.)



Happy Birthday to both of these wonderful suffragists.

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