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Adirondack History: Inez Milholland

Inez Milholland was one of the most enigmatic figures of the U.S. suffrage movement. She was a tireless crusader for women's rights; speaking fearlessly, captivating crowds, and inspiring countless women. Her charisma, intelligence, and beauty made her an iconic figure in history.

Inez Milholland was born on August 6, 1886. She grew up in New York City and London, and went to school in Germany. She spent summers with her family at the Meadowmount farm in Lewis, New York. Inez graduated from Vassar College. She was the captain of her field hockey team and she held records in shot-put and the basketball throw. She was the graduation speaker for her class and she starred in many theatricals including playing male leads in the Shakespeare plays.

While in London, she became involved with the Women's Social and Political Union and worked with internationally famous suffragettes such as Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughters. She helped carry the movement to the U.S. by leading a suffrage rally at Vassar, much to the dismay of the school's President. He demanded the rally be held off campus so Inez held it in a nearby graveyard. She and her sister, Vida called it the "Graveyard Rally." Inez traveled across the United States campaigning for the woman's suffrage movement. Inez showed her bravery by leading several suffrage parades on her horse, Grey Dawn, often having to ride through riotous crowds. One of the more notorious events in Inez's life was in March of 1913, when about ten thousand suffragettes marched from the Capital down Pennsylvania Avenue past the White House in attempt to gain support for the federal amendment to give women the right to vote. Inez led the parade in a stunning costume of white and gold, atop her huge white horse. She was followed by nine bands, four brigades, three heralds, more than twenty floats, and an army of women of all classes. She and her fellow suffragettes were heckled, spit upon, and physically assaulted, but they marched on, determined to fight for their cause. She became the poster girl for the suffrage movement. Astride her horse, she echoed the image of Joan of Arc.



Inez Mitholland

"I can't be happy while others are not; I can't be free until others have got at least as much as I have."

Inez died on November 25th, 1916, a mere thirty years old, diagnosed with pernicious anemia. She was buried in the Lewis Cemetery at the foot of Mount Discovery. The ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment was still four years away. Her last public words before collapsing on stage in California were to President Wilson: "Mr. President, how long must women wait for liberty?"



Girls Celebrating the Womens Suffrage Movement

