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CIVIL WAR TO CIVIL RIGHTS: WOMAN'S CHRISTIAN TEMPERANCE UNION



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Kentucky WCTU chapters were politically active. They supported H.V. McChesney for governor in 1915 because he was a reform candidate. Although McChesney did not win the election, the WCTU continued to work closely with prohibition and reform-minded politicians and fought for women's right to vote.

The passage of federal prohibition and women's suffrage laws dampened WCTU efforts, but it remains an international organization and continues to promote anti-substance abuse, drug reform and moral issues.

STATEWIDE — The Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) was an international organization founded in 1873 to promote social reform along with Christian moral principles.

The organization of mostly Protestant women sought to reform society of its ills, especially poverty, alcoholism and inequality, through electoral and policy changes. The WCTU supported women's suffrage efforts, but spent the bulk of its organizing energy on curbing the use of alcohol, especially by immigrant families. The WCTU believed that alcohol use was a contributing factor to poverty and domestic strife, and sought to elevate men's moral standing by banning alcohol and tobacco.

The Kentucky Historical Society (KHS) links Kentuckians with their past via archival collections that document people from every walk of life, reaching back to 1509. Letters, diaries, oral histories and photographs, as well as the first and second Kentucky Constitutions, are included. Find these and other KHS collections online at khscatalog.kyvl.org

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