

ADVERTISEMENT

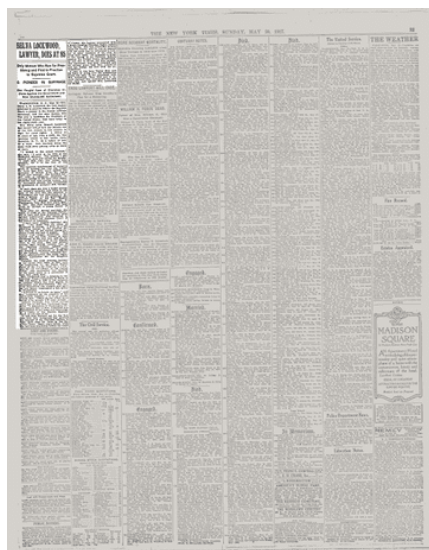
***BELVA LOCKWOOD, LAWYER, DIES
AT 85; Only Woman Who Ran for
Presidency and First to Practice in
Supreme Court. A PIONEER IN
SUFFRAGE She Fought Case of
Cherokee Indians Against the
Government and Won \$5,000,000
Settlement.***

[Share full article](#)

May 20, 1917

See the article in its original context from
May 20, 1917, Page 23 | [Buy Reprints](#)

[VIEW ON TIMESMACHINE](#)



The New York Times Archives



TimesMachine is an exclusive benefit for home delivery and digital subscribers.

About the Archive

This is a digitized version of an article from The Times's print archive, before the start of online publication in 1996. To preserve these articles as they originally appeared, The Times does not alter, edit or update them.

Occasionally the digitization process introduces transcription errors or other problems; we are continuing to work to improve these archived versions.

WASHINGTON, D. C., May 19.-Mrs. Belva A. B. Lockwood, the first woman admitted to practice before the Supreme Court, a pioneer in the woman suffrage movement, and the only woman who was ever a candidate for President of the United States, died here today in her eighty-sixth year.

Mrs. Belva Anna Bennett Lockwood had herself told of how she became one of the first women in this country to fight for equal rights. A widow at 24 years of age, with a child, she was teaching school in her native town, Royalton, N. Y., at a salary of only \$8 a week. Men teachers doing the same work were getting twice as much or more.

"I kicked to the school trustees," she said, I went to the wife of the Methodist minister. The answer I got opened my eyes and raised my dander. I can't help you; you cannot help yourself, for it is the way of the world.'

The apparent hopelessness of woman's cause so aroused her that she fought for more than fifty years against the exclusion of women from the rights which men enjoyed. She fortified herself with a collegiate education at Genesee College in the days when higher education was rare among

women, and for successive periods was Preceptress of seminaries at Lockport and Oswego, N. Y. In each place she was a leader among the women's societies, and when at the close of the civil war she removed to Washington she was determined to become a lawyer. In the meantime she married again, to the Rev. Ezekiel Lockwood, a Baptist clergyman in Washington, who died nine years later, in 1877. Her first husband had been Uriah H. McNall, a young farmer of Royalton.

ADVERTISEMENT

Soon after her second marriage she began to study at the National University of Law, and upon graduation, after spirited controversy, was admitted to practice before the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia.

"I have never stopped fighting," she said. "My cause was the cause of thousands of women. I drew up a bill admitting women to the practice before the bar of the United States Supreme Court and had it passed. This victory was widely acclaimed. She herself was the first woman to take advantage of the new law, and at the age of 49 was admitted to the highest court in the land. She won several notable legal battles, notably that of the Cherokee Indians against the United States Government. She secured a settlement of \$5,000,000 for the Indians. During President Garfield's administration she made unsuccessful application for the Brazilian mission.

Probably the most striking incident in her career then came, in 1884, with the nomination by the Equal Rights Party of the Pacific Slope as a candidate for the Presidency of the United States. The nomination was renewed by the same party at a convention in Iowa four years later. Mrs. Lockwood was a delegate to the Universal Peace Convention at Paris in 1889 and again in 1900 to the congress at London, where she read papers on arbitration and disarmament. She lectured throughout the country and until her last illness maintained a law office in Washington.

"Suffrage is no longer an issue," said Mrs. Lockwood on the occasion of her

eighty-fifth birthday. "It is an accomplished fact. Those States which have denied it to women will come around."

Andrew Carnegie was asked several years ago to aid Mrs. Lockwood financially. A delegation of Washington citizens sought him as Mrs. Lockwood was dispossessed of her home and belongings by a ruling of the District Supreme Court at the age of 84. It was then brought out for the first time how Mrs. Lockwood had received the retainer of the Cherokee Indians to fight their case for them in the Supreme Court. Many years before, when she had been practicing before the Court of Claims, she became acquainted with a North Carolina Cherokee Indian named Jim Taylor. She had conducted several cases for Taylor, and he was so pleased with her work that he influenced a number of other members of his tribe to bring their cases. He proposed to bring to her claims of the Cherokee Indians against the United States Government, he and she to divide the fees equally. The agreement was duly recorded and for several years both Mrs. Lockwood and the Indian did well with the arrangement. A year or two later Taylor died, and his heirs in going over his possessions found the copy of the agreement with Mrs. Lockwood. They filed suit to recover one-half Mrs. Lockwood's fee, and won their case against Mrs. Lockwood for \$9,000.

[Share full article](#)

ADVERTISEMENT

© 2025 The New York Times Company

- [NYTCo](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Accessibility](#)
- [Work with us](#)
- [Advertise](#)
- [T Brand Studio](#)
- [Your Ad Choices](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [Terms of Service](#)
- [Terms of Sale](#)
- [Site Map](#)
- [Help](#)
- [Subscriptions](#)
- [Your Privacy Choices](#)