



Maggie Smith Hathaway

Maggie Smith Hathaway (1867 - 1955)

Maggie Smith Hathaway, the daughter of Methodist minister Isaac N. Smith and former school teacher Martha Adams Larick Smith, was born in Ottawa, Ohio in 1867. The family moved to Stevensville, in the Boonville valley, in 1894, but often spent time in Helena when Rev. Smith served as Chaplain to the Legislature. Maggie, who had taught school in Ohio from 1892 to 1893, continued her career in Montana, working as a teacher in the Helena schools and serving several terms as Lewis and Clark County Superintendent of Schools between 1894 and 1911. Her interest in youth, however, did not end with their schooling. Through the Methodist Church, she became a national figure in the youth-oriented YWCA Leagues. In 1923, she compiled *A Manual of the Laws of Montana Pertaining to Children*, and, later, from 1925 to 1937, served as Secretary of the Bureau of Child Protection.

Among Maggie Smith Hathaway's causes were two of the most controversial of her time—women's rights and temperance. As early as 1905, in her report as County Superintendent of Schools, Maggie had commented on the salary inequities between male and female school employees. In 1915, a year after joining the campaign for woman suffrage, she served as the lobbyist for the Legislative Council of Montana Women. Elected to the Legislature in 1916 as its first woman member, Maggie Smith Hathaway served until 1922, becoming along the way Minority Floor Leader and Chairman of the Committee on Public Morals, Charities and Reforms. As a long-time member of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, Maggie was instrumental in securing passage of the prohibition referendum in Montana. A delegate to the Democratic National Convention in 1920, she cast her vote for a "dry" plank in the party platform. Twenty years later, at age 75, Maggie was still at work on this issue—serving as Head of the Montana State Temperance Commission.

Maggie wed Professor B.T. Hathaway, Deputy State Superintendent of Public Instruction, in March 1911, but their marriage was to end tragically with his death only six months later.

Among the many tributes paid to her in later life, few are as apt as that paid by a group of Montana college professors who praised Maggie Smith Hathaway—educator, youth advocate, and diligent campaigner for women's rights and temperance—for her life-long "translation of ethics into action".