

Kentuckians and Civic Action



Laura Clay, Library of Congress

A major leader in women's suffrage was Madison County native Laura Clay.

Born near **Richmond** on February 8, 1848, Laura's father was noted emancipationist Cassius Marcellus Clay. Educated in Kentucky, Michigan, and New York, Laura's work for women's rights was partially inspired by her parents' contentious divorce.

In 1888, Clay co-founded the Kentucky Equal Rights Association and was the long-time president of that organization. She worked for property rights for women, the joint guardianship of children, the right for women to earn their own wages, and pushed Kentucky colleges to admit female students. Clay was also a leader of the Kentucky Federation of Women's Clubs, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and the Southern States' Women Suffrage Association.

Clay is now remembered as a national leader in the women's suffrage movement.