

ISCHUA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

CADIZ CONNECTION TO A PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

[Belva Ann Bennett McNall Lockwood](#) was born on October 24th, 1830 in the Town of Royalton, near Lockport, New York. She lived with her parents Lewis Johnson Bennett and his wife Hannah Green in a log cabin, now long gone.

By the age of 14 she was teaching at the local school. In 1848 she married a farmer named Uriah McNall who was related to the tuberculosis in 1853. Belva was left old daughter Lura to support. She Seminary to prepare for college. many of her friends since it was higher education. She was Genesee College in Lima, New

She graduated with honors and Lockport Union School. She she was paid half of what the It troubled her that education preparing them for domestic life number of school districts in New have more career options in life. In the curriculum for women to include



McNalls who lived in Cadiz. He died of with no money and her three year attended Genesee Wesleyan This plan was poorly received by unusual for a widow to seek finally successful in convincing York to admit her.

became headmistress of the was dismayed to discover that men in her profession received. for females was limited to or teaching. Belva taught in a York State. She wanted women to her schools she sought to expand public speaking, botany and gymnastics.

While she attended college she became interested in the law. The college did not have a law department so she became a student of a lawyer who offered private courses.

Belva moved to Washington, D.C. in 1866. She married Reverend [Ezekial Lockwood](#), an older man, who was a Baptist minister and dentist. They had a daughter Jessie who died as a toddler. Her husband had progressive ideas and encouraged his wife to pursue her interest in law.

She was finally able to be accepted at the [National University Law School](#), now known as George Washington University. Although she completed her courses in 1870, the University refused to grant her a diploma on the grounds that she was a woman. Without the diploma she could not be accepted to the District of Columbia Bar. She appealed to President Ulysses S. Grant, asking him for justice. She received her diploma a week later in 1873, at the age of 43.

ISCHUA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Judges often denied her access to the courts, one telling her that God Himself had determined that women were not equal to men and never could be. When she attempted to respond she was removed from the court room.

Belva began to build a practice and eventually won over many of her detractors. She was active in women's suffrage organizations. She lobbied from 1874 to 1879 to pass an anti-discrimination bill allowing women to have the same access to the bar as men. President Rutherford B. Hayes finally signed the law that let qualified women attorneys practice in any federal court. Belva Lockwood was sworn in as the first woman member of the Supreme Court Bar on March 3, 1879. She also became the first woman to argue before the Supreme Court. Unfortunately her husband did not live to see her success as he died in April 1877.

In 1884 and 1888 she ran for President as the candidate of the National Equal Rights Party. She did not have a serious chance of winning, but she did receive 4,100 votes from men. Remember that women were not allowed to vote at this time. Her supporters witnessed voter fraud when many of her ballots were ripped up and thrown out. She had even received some electoral votes.

Belva became a respected author who wrote many essays on women's suffrage and the need for equal legal rights for women. She believed in world peace and disarmament. Her career as a lawyer lasted 43 years and she died May 19th, 1917. She is buried in the [Congressional Cemetery](#). Among the honors given her were: an honorary doctorate in law from Syracuse University, several towns in the U.S. were named after her, mothers named their daughters Belva, the Liberty Ship USS Belva Lockwood was named for her, her portrait was hung in the National Gallery in Washington D.C., 3 ship figureheads were carved in her likeness and in 1986 she was honored with a 17 cent postage stamp. Belva Lockwood helped to open the legal profession to women and paved the way for women to seek to be President of the United States. (Her first husband, Uriah McNall, was a cousin to the McNalls in Cadiz).