MISSOURI POLITICAL TRAILBLAZERS: 1920s

Mayme Hanrahan Ousley (1887-1970)
Born in Edgar Springs, Missouri, Mayme Ousley moved to St. James with her husband in 1906. On April 5, 1921, Ousley was elected Mayor of the city of St. James, the first woman mayor of St. James and in the state of Missouri. She was elected again in 1939, 1941, and 1955. (Image courtesy of The Southeast Missourian, June 3, 1921.)

Mellcene Thurman Smith (1871-1957)
A Missouri native, Mellcene Smith was one of the first two women elected to the Missouri General Assembly. She served in the House of Representatives for one term beginning in 1923, for the 2nd District of St. Louis County. 50-year-old Smith won by advocating “clean” government. (Image courtesy of the State Historical Society of Missouri.)

Sara Lucille Turner (1898-1972)
Sara Turner was the second woman elected to the Missouri House of Representatives and began serving her single term alongside Mellcene T. Smith in 1923. The youngest member of the House at age 24, Turner had recently graduated from the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law in 1922. Turner was also the first woman to serve as acting Speaker of the House. (Image courtesy of the Missouri Senate.)

Emma Nell (Unknown dates)
As third female legislator and the first Republican to win an election from Missouri in 1924, Emma Nell of Carthage served three terms in the Missouri House of Representatives, cosponsoring a bill to create the Missouri Highway Patrol. (Image courtesy of the Missouri Senate.)