



WORCESTER WOMEN'S HISTORY PROJECT

We remember our past . . . to better shape our future.

WWHP VOLUME 11, NO. 2

FALL 2011

Abby Kelley Foster inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame

By Kara Wilson

It's hard to believe how quickly time has flown by since receiving the exciting announcement in early March that Abby Kelley Foster would be inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame. But before we knew it, we were on our way to Seneca Falls, New York, on the morning of September 30 for a busy weekend filled with activities leading up to the induction ceremony on October 1.

About 20 people representing Worcester Women's History Project and Abby's House made the trip from Worcester to Seneca Falls in support of Abby's long-awaited induction. WWHP had nominated Abby Kelley Foster for induction into the NWHF four times, so the weekend was a jubilant reunion of WWHP Steering Committee members from the past and present who each played a part in making Abby's induction possible. However, no one has worked more tirelessly on getting Abby recognized than Lynne McKenney Lydick, who portrays Abby in WWHP's one-woman show *Yours for Humanity—Abby*. It was fitting that Lynne was chosen to represent Abby at the induction ceremony.

The National Women's Hall of Fame holds their induction ceremonies every other year. Usually,

they induct ten women at a time, five living and five deceased. However, this year there was a tie between two candidates. Therefore, eleven women were inducted. In addition to Abby Kelley Foster, the deceased inductees were: Sister Katharine Drexel, a missionary who devoted her life and fortune to aid Native Americans and African Americans; Dorothy Harrison Eustis, who founded The Seeing Eye dog guide school; Billie Holiday, the jazz vocalist; and Coretta Scott King, the champion of human and civil rights. The six living inductees were: Dr. Loretta C. Ford, who created the nurse practitioner program; Helen Murray Free, a chemist who discovered the first dip-and-test strips for testing urine glucose levels; Lilly Ledbetter, who fought to achieve pay equity between men and women; Senator Barbara A. Mikulski, the first female Democratic United States Senator elected in her own right; Dr. Donna E. Shalala, the longest serving U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services; and Katherine Switzer, the first woman to enter the Boston Marathon.

After checking into the Hotel Clarence, we only had to walk down to the lobby to attend a gala reception in the evening, which included complimentary drinks called "Inductinis," wine from the many local wineries in the Finger Lakes, a large buffet, and a

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Courtesy, American Antiquarian Society

Abby Kelley Foster 1811-1887
200th Birthday Year

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Induction of
Abby Kelley Foster
into
National Abolition Hall of Fame
October 22, 2011
www.nahof.org

WORCESTER WOMEN'S HISTORY PROJECT

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WWHP is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable and educational organization incorporated in 1995 with a vision "to celebrate and document women's contributions to the history, social fabric, and culture of Worcester and beyond."

- raise awareness of the rich history of women in the Worcester area
- create national recognition of Worcester's role in the history of the women's rights movement
- advance the ideals put forth in the 1850 convention that there should be "equality before the law, without distinction of sex or color," or ethnicity.

www.wwhp.org

President's Message

Dear WWHP Friends,

Fall 2011 heralds the landmark occasion of Abby Kelley Foster's induction into the National Women's Hall of Fame. She was first nominated in the 1990s and four times since then. It's been a long wait, and we are indebted to the women who began the process and to those who, over the years, persisted and continued to champion Abby. Thank you!

On October 1, 2011, over a dozen WWHP members and supporters were in Seneca Falls, New York, as Abby received her long overdue recognition (Lynne McKenney Lydick, dressed as Abby, accepted). It was my privilege to attend, – one of my last "official" duties as President before completing my term of office at the annual meeting on November 5th. By the way, please mark the date on your calendars to join us at the Worcester Historical Museum at 2:00 p.m. After a short business meeting, MA State Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development, Joanne Goldstein, will be our speaker. Like Frances Perkins, "Madame Secretary" Goldstein grew up in Worcester. "Worcester, the city of "Madame Secretaries," has a nice ring to it, don't you think? Worcester, the city of fantastic, amazing women ... but who knew? Who knows? That's something WWHP continually works to change.

Abby will also be inducted into the National Abolition Hall of Fame in Peterboro, NY, on October 22nd. An induction dinner will be held at Colgate University followed by Lynne McKenney Lydick's performance of "Yours for Humanity —Abby." Co-author Carolyn Howe will be attending and some other of the band of WWHP "happy travelers."

Along with this year's national highlights, we were delighted to meet Professor Mary Muldowney from Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland. Prof. Muldowney visited with the WWOHP to learn more about our oral history project. We shared information and decided that our website and hers will be linked. WWHP goes international!

Two of our Steering Committee members' terms end with the annual meeting: Stephanie Yuhl, busy wife, mother and Holy Cross professor, who during one conversation about building membership said something like "Let's just tell them to come and hang out with a great bunch of interesting, amazing, fabulous women!" Judy Finkel, chair of the events extraordinaire, will leave the Steering Committee, but move to the nominating committee. Many thanks to both. It has been my pleasure to serve with and get to know these "fabulous women."

The heartbeat of WWHP is Nancy Avila, a remarkable woman in her own right. Nancy is one of those people who avoids the lime-light, remains in the background and quietly and effectively just MAKES things happen. I cannot complete this last "President's Message" without a big shout out to Nancy: "Thank you!!"

Fran Langille

Abby... (continued from p1)

silent auction of items donated by past and present inductees. The gala also included live Big Band music and the opportunity to meet the inductees and personnel from the National Women's Hall of Fame. We also got to talk with Colleen Jenkins, who is the great-great granddaughter of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and a long-time supporter of the NWHF. Ms. Jenkins visited Seneca Falls schools earlier in the day, along with Lynne McKenney Lydick, and a few others representing important historical women.

On Saturday, October 1, the day started with breakfast at the hotel, where we met Miriam Ascarelli, author of *Independent Vision: Dorothy Harrison Eustis and the Story of the Seeing Eye*. Ms. Ascarelli is also a blogger for *Ms. Magazine* and interviewed people from WWHP and Abby's House for her blog. Following breakfast, we had many activities to choose from to celebrate Induction Weekend. Fortunately, Seneca Falls is a village where it is easy to walk everywhere. Some of us chose to take a tour of the National Women's Hall of Fame gallery. We learned that the NWHF recently won a \$2.5 million grant through Recovery New York to renovate the nearby Seneca Knitting Mills building to house the NWHF museum. Some people chose to attend a play called *Mosaic: Voices of Women's Suffrage*, which was written and performed by three junior high school students from Colorado. The play showcases the life stories of famous American suffragists Julia Ward Howe, Caroline Churchill, and Alice Paul.

Following lunch at Zuzu's (named for the character in *It's a Wonderful Life*), we walked to the Women's Rights Historical Park, where the 1848 convention was held. Here we were treated to a lecture and book signing with Penny Colman, author of *Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, A Friendship That Changed the World*.

Finally, the time had come to head over to the New York Chiropractic College Athletic Center for the induction dinner and ceremony. We were pleasantly surprised to find that WWHP Vice-President, Doreen Velnich, had generously arranged to have beautiful purple shawls waiting for each of us at our tables. We also each received a bag from Avon, courtesy of

(Continued on p10, "Abby...")

NOTICE OF 16th ANNUAL MEETING OF WORCESTER WOMEN'S HISTORY PROJECT

Saturday, November 5, 2011, 2:00 P.M.

Worcester Historical Museum

30 Elm Street, Worcester, Massachusetts

FOR THE FOLLOWING PURPOSES:

1. To hear the President's report.
2. To approve the minutes of the last Annual Meeting held October 23, 2010.
3. To approve the Treasurer's report for fiscal year ending June 30, 2011.
4. To approve the budget for fiscal year ending June 30, 2012.
5. To elect Officers, Steering Committee, and Nominating Committee.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Plummer, Clerk

PROGRAM following the annual meeting:



**Joanne F. Goldstein,
Secretary of Labor and
Workforce Development for
Massachusetts**

Secretary Goldstein is a member of Governor Deval Patrick's Cabinet and is also one of the five members of his "development cabinet" which works across agency and department lines to spur economic growth and job creation. A Massachusetts native who has lived in Worcester, Secretary Goldstein has spent her entire professional career fighting for the interests of working men and women across the Commonwealth and the nation. She has been a labor attorney and public servant promoting the rights of workers to good jobs, with living wages, at safe workplaces. She believes that the pursuit of economic and social justice are the cornerstones of who we are as a community and a Commonwealth.

The annual meeting and program are free and open to the public.

Oral History Community Workshop

By Maureen Ryan Doyle

Co-Chair of Oral History Project (with Charlene Martin)

Charlene L. Martin, Linda Rosenlund, and Maureen Ryan Doyle led an Oral History Community Workshop on May 26 at the Worcester Historical Museum. This free workshop focused on methods of collecting and sharing oral histories. Topics that were covered included: Developing Questions for the Interview, Listening Intently, The Importance of Follow-Up Questions, Transcription Tips, What to Bring to the Interview, and Legal Documents.

The audience was comprised of several individuals from the city of Worcester as well as many others from surrounding towns. While some were interested in preserving the memories of relatives within their own families, others were interested in beginning or continuing community oral history projects. The workshop also contained information for teachers seeking to implement oral histories in a classroom setting.

A lively question and answer session followed the formal presentations. Those in attendance posed many incisive questions which led to in-depth discussions of the finer points of conducting oral histories. The workshop concluded with Charlene Martin and Maureen Ryan Doyle reading excerpts from their forthcoming book, *Voices of Worcester Women: 160 Years after the First National Woman's Rights Convention*.

This workshop was offered as part of the Worcester Women's History Project's ongoing commitment to research, document, and celebrate women's history while developing relationships with women's groups, historical organizations, and the greater Worcester community.



Pictured: Maureen Ryan Doyle, Linda Rosenlund and Charlene Martin

ASSUMPTION MAGAZINE, Summer 2011 issue, contains an article entitled, "History in the Making: Alumnae Lead Women's Oral History Project" written by Troy Watkins.



Exchange of oral history experiences and ideas between Worcester and Dublin September 22 with Dr. Charlene Martin, Maureen Ryan Doyle, Fran Langille, Dr. Mary Muldowney (of Dublin), Linda Rosenlund, Dr. Regina Edmonds

WOULD YOU LIKE TO VOLUNTEER TO WORK ON
Public Relations, *Yours for Humanity*—Abby,
Research, Development

Contact Nancy at wwhp.office@gmail.com

The Worcester Women's Oral History Project records, collects, and shares the personal and historical memories of women through the Greater Worcester community. The Project focuses on the four areas that characterized the spirit of the first National Woman's Rights Convention held in Worcester in 1850: work, education, health, and politics. These four themes resonate strongly with today's Central Massachusetts women, as they continue to make history in their everyday lives.

<http://www.startonthestreet.org>

WWHP participates in

stART on the STREET

sponsored by Worcester Cultural Coalition



Learning to do quilling

Heather-Lyn Haley coordinated the WWHP booth with help from Jeana Edmonds, Hayley Gleason, Louise Gleason, Mary Plummer, and Hanna Solska at the successful stARTs on May 22 and September 18.

Liberty Farm notecards

are available for sale at upcoming events



Painting to the left by Emily Boosahda of Worcester and reproduced with permission.

It's 5 x 7.

Sketch by Hilary Fask of Worcester at age 12 and reproduced with permission. It's 4.25 x 5.5.



Liberty Farm was the home of Abby Kelley Foster (1811-1887) and her husband, Stephen Symonds Foster, from 1847 until 1881. Though both were widely sought after as lecturers, in 1847, the couple purchased the farm and immediately opened the house to slaves escaping north on the Underground Railroad. Liberty Farm, a National Historic Landmark, is located in the Tatnuck section of Worcester.

Yours for Humanity —Abby

What a year for Abby Kelley Foster! She was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame on October 1 and will be inducted into the National Abolition Hall of Fame on October 22! Please see the articles in this newsletter about the NWHF induction. The NAHOF induction will be in the next issue of the newsletter.

Thanks to Lynne McKenney Lydick and her many years of hard work portraying Abby Kelley Foster in *Yours for Humanity —Abby*. Lynne's endless energy for *YFH-A* has brought Abby Kelley Foster into the national limelight again. We are very proud of Lynne and the wonderful work she does!

On **September 30**, Lynne portrayed her at Myn-derse Academy in Seneca Falls, NY. This presentation was for the National Women's Hall of Fame's "Come Talk with Great Women," a regional educational opportunity. On **October 22**, Lynne will perform *Yours for Humanity —Abby* at the National Abolition Hall of Fame inductions. On **October 30**, *Yours for Humanity —Abby* will be presented at the Gunn Memorial Library and Museum in Washington, CT. This is a special performance because 171 years ago Abby Kelley Foster was forbidden to speak in this church. On **November 4**, a presentation will be given for the Shrewsbury Women's Club at the First Congregational Church in Shrewsbury. In November, there will also be four performances as part of the Worcester Public Schools' "This is My City."

Can you suggest venues which might like to present *Yours for Humanity —Abby*? For example, do you know of any schools, colleges, organizations or programs that are interested in a presentation that involves women's rights and or abolition. The 150th anniversary of the Civil War is a great time to host *YFH-A*. We would love to educate as many people as we can about this unbelievable Worcester woman. Please give us information on the name of the school or organization with contact name and email or telephone number. You may call 508-767-1852 or email info@wwhp.org.

Thanks,
Beth Harding

An early fighter for women's rights

By Barbara Kohin

Published in *Worcester Magazine* on March 18, 1992

Review of *Ahead of Her Time: Abby Kelley and the Politics of Antislavery* by Dorothy Sterling (W.W. Norton Co.)

Abby Kelley comes alive in Dorothy Sterling's book, the first full-fledged biography of the abolitionist and feminist, whose parents moved to Worcester soon after her birth in 1811, and who died 76 years later in her sister Lucy's boarding house at 100 Chatham Street.

After two years at a Quaker boarding school in Providence, Abby taught school in Worcester, Millbury and Lynn before heeding "the call" to serve as a lecturer for the cause of antislavery.

It wasn't easy work. In dozens of meetings and lectures in New England, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Michigan, Abby Kelley urged support for the anti-slavery cause, begged for funds and sold abolitionist tracts and subscriptions to antislavery newspapers.

She was outspoken and self-confident, but her remarkable courage was severely tested by hostile audiences, and she was sometimes the target of eggs or tomatoes. In 1841 a Philadelphia mob smashed and burned Pennsylvania Hall, the site of an antislavery convention at which Abby spoke.

While Abby Kelley's assertiveness offended those who thought women should not speak in public, her warmth and beauty inspired many others. She was always on the lookout for potential leaders, and encouraged and trained many women lecturers. Among her best-known protégés were Lucy Stone and Susan B. Anthony.

Opposition to the participation of women and black people in the movement, along with differing attitudes toward political participation and non-resistance, led to a schism in the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1840. Abby Kelley, whose nomination to the society's business committee at the national convention precipitated a crisis, was widely blamed for the split. She was denounced for her "effrontery in asserting the right of her sex to an equal place with men."

Abby was married in 1845 to Stephen S. Foster, a fellow abolitionist, lecturer and pamphleteer whose confrontational style offended many of her friends. Although Abby and Stephen sometimes differed on issues or tactics, he was a supportive husband, proud of Abby's success and joining her in 1872 in refusing to pay taxes on their jointly-owned Worcester farm because Abby was denied the right to vote.

The Fosters' farm on Mower Street, which is now a national historic landmark, was purchased by Stephen in 1847. Abby, visiting a sister in Rhode Island at the time,

Worcester at the NWHF Inductions, October 1, 2011



was disappointed with his choice. "Of all the neighborhoods in Worcester," she wrote, "Tatnuck is the most repulsive to me." Stephen was a skillful farmer and the dilapidated farmhouse he bought was soon renovated and surrounded by fertile fields and orchards. The big house with its many cellars was well-suited to its role as a station on the Underground Railroad.

Abby, like many of her abolitionist colleagues, supported a constellation of "18th [sic. 19th]-century reform movements — women's rights, temperance, dietary reform — but her chief priority until the 1870s was the anti-slavery cause and, after emancipation, the plight of the freed slaves. This attitude alienated some suffragists, who objected to Abby's support for the 15th Amendment because, while it granted black men the right to vote, the amendment did not enfranchise women.

Dorothy Sterling's task as biographer was complicated by Abby Kelley's aversion to self-publicity and her "Quaker habit" of speaking only extemporaneously. Fortunately, in eight years of research, Ms. Sterling has gathered a wealth of material from the letters of Abby and her contemporaries as well as accounts in 18th [sic. 19th]-century newspapers and journals.

This richly-detailed and lively account should bring Abby Kelley the recognition she deserves as a heroine of the antislavery and women's rights movements. ■

Editors Note: Jean Wood was asked to review our trip to Lenox last June. She was so inspired that it led her to research details of Edith Wharton's life all summer. This is the result.

A Glimpse into Lenox's Gilded Age

By Jean Wood

The WWHP's annual 2011 bus trip, held on Saturday, June 11, was attended by twenty-eight women. Heavy rain fell as we clambered onto the bus with drenched umbrellas, and it continued throughout the morning. The weather did not seem to dampen the spirits of our group, however, and, once settled, WWHP Events Committee chair Judy Finkel circulated two articles for our orientation. Bound for Lenox, we would visit two historic mansions: Edith Wharton's The Mount and Ventfort Hall, home of Sarah Morgan, sister of financier J. Pierpont Morgan.

Edith Wharton, born Edith Neubold Jones in 1862, was the daughter of George and Lucretia Jones. Her brothers, 16 and 12 years older, were away at boarding school during much of her childhood. Edith was raised by her adoring Doyley, the Irish nursemaid who had raised her younger brother. Edith regarded Doyley as her best friend.

The Joneses, whose ancestors had made their fortunes in real estate, were among the wealthiest, most socially prominent families of 19th century New York. They belonged to the Leisure Class and lived on the income from their inheritances. But New York was in transition during the second half of the 19th century. Survival of the Leisure Class was threatened, its members gradually being displaced by entrepreneurs with a new burst of great wealth and philanthropic and civic objectives for spending it. Edith Wharton later would describe her family as "middle class," distinguishing them from the grander aristocrats (her forebears), and, equally, from the recent incomers with more money and no pedigree (the entrepreneurs).

Like others in their class the Joneses resisted change. Snobbery, conservatism, fear of alienation, complacency, lack of imagination, and racial and sexual protectionism were ingrained. They tended to be haughty, narrow-minded, superficial, and hostile to intellectual life, art, and literature—to innovation of any kind. Known for their impeccable manners and good taste, they shared strict standards of social conduct and mingled only with one another—writers, not considered gentlemen or perceived as Bohemian or common, were among the outsiders excluded.

The Joneses did a few charities, walks in (Central) Park, and social calls. Most evenings were spent either entertaining or being entertained. They attended the newly fashionable opera, not because they enjoyed music, but to socialize with their friends. Conversation generally was limited to parochial concerns; politics and religion were mentioned within acceptable boundaries; and the subject of war was taboo. The Leisure Class, perpetually on the alert for ill-breeding, essentially practiced "an elaborate policy of social ostracism." Girls raised during this era were neither expected nor encouraged to think independently or express themselves. Young women were expected only to marry, reproduce, and entertain and, as

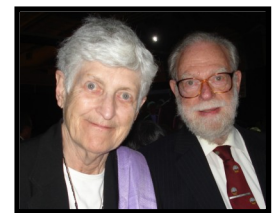
Worcester at the NWHF Inductions, October 1, 2011



Fran Langille
Lynne McKenney Lydick



Annette Rafferty
Barbara Mikulski



Barbara & Roger Kohin

wives, be subservient to their husbands. Writing for the pleasure of others was not condoned. Any woman deviating from the expected conduct was ridiculed, scorned, or avoided.

The Joneses owned two houses: one in New York and one in Newport, the latter with a smaller 10-room cottage on the premises. Lucretia Jones, a compulsive shopper with grandiose aspirations, was famous for her beautiful Parisian clothes and stylish parties. Edith would recall seeing her father bent over his desk trying to reconcile his narrowing fixed income with her mother's expenditures. But the Joneses, like their peers, also were victims of economic circumstances beyond their control—the post-war slump in property values. And the Joneses, like many of their friends, rented out their houses and went to live in Europe to economize.

The Joneses lived in Europe between 1866 and 1872. During this period Edith learned to write, read, and speak

(The rest of this article is in ADDENDUM. See "A Glimpse....")

➤ *Are you thinking about learning more about WWHP? Think about volunteering.*

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*In Memory of Lois Green,
 a local heroine*
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FACTS

The Portraits Project

In 1998, the Worcester Women's History Project commissioned internationally-known artists to paint portraits of four notable Worcester County women – Clara Barton, Dorothea Dix, Abby Kelley Foster, and Lucy Stone – to hang in historic Mechanics Hall, which until then had displayed only images of male dignitaries.

Women 2000

In October 2000, WWHP celebrated the 150th anniversary of the first National Woman's Rights Convention. **Women 2000** was a successful three-day conference on contemporary women's issues, featuring many keynote speakers, panels, workshops, exhibits, and performances, including the world premiere of *Angels and Infidels* – an original play, commissioned by WWHP, about the story of the groundbreaking 1850 convention.



WOMEN IN PRINT 2011: History in Poetry and Prose

A Review by Kara Wilson

The 8th annual WOMEN IN PRINT event was held on March 9, 2011 to an audience of 45 people at the Worcester Public Library. Worcester Women's History Project President Fran Langille commented that the date for this event was changed from February to March so it could be held during Women's History Month, which is also Membership Month for WWHP. Following her opening remarks, Fran Langille introduced WWHP Events Committee Chair, Judy Finkel, who thanked her committee for organizing the event and the refreshments, and then introduced local author, Jessica Bane Robert.

Jessica Bane Robert is originally from Bethel, Maine, and currently teaches at Clark University. She published the poetry book *Scarred Seasons* in 2009 and is working on a mixed-genre memoir about growing up "off the grid" in Maine on land that has been in her family since the 1700's. Ms. Robert read mostly non-fiction from her memoir, even though she claims to "mostly be a poet — interested in writing across the genres of poetry and prose." She began her reading with a poem called "Awake," which is about spring, followed by a prose piece called "Ice Skating Fantasies," about a woman finding her voice. The latter piece talks about how magical and beautiful her home is, even though she eventually felt called to leave. Ms. Robert followed this with a poem called "Resignation," about her home and family in Maine, and then a short prose piece called "Effigy," about collecting sap. She finished with a poem called "What of God?" about her children being raised Catholic, even though she was not raised going to church.

Judy Finkel then introduced the next author: Janette Greenwood, who also is a professor at Clark University. Dr. Greenwood wrote a book entitled *Bittersweet Legacy* about race relations in Charlotte, North Carolina. She later wrote about the African American population in Worcester who had migrated north to escape slavery in the book *First Fruits of Freedom*. The inspiration for the latter book was a course Ms. Greenwood taught during her first year at Clark called "Black Worcester." There was a migration during the Civil War to Worcester and other northern cities. Abby Kelley Foster and Stephen Foster were some of the people who helped runaway slaves flee to safety, as were Worcester soldiers from the Massachusetts 25th Infantry, led by General William Draper of Hopedale. Approximately 1,000 slaves came to Worcester by 1900. Dr. Greenwood followed the stories of African Americans who migrated to Worcester during this time and

their families. She learned about the southern African American community that formed in Worcester around the John Street Baptist Church and interviewed people who migrated from the South in the 1930s, but claimed "the South will always be home."

Judy Finkel then introduced the final author of the evening, poet Eve Rifkah. Ms. Rifkah has been an adjunct professor at WPI, but currently teaches at Clark University. She claims to "have spent my life in books, an informal education conducted in libraries, not in schools." Ms. Rifkah began with reading from her book *Dear Suzanne*, containing poems about the artist, Suzanne Valadon. Ms. Rifkah mentioned first hearing about Valadon from her father on a trip to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, where she saw Renoir's painting "The Dance at the Bougivol," for which Valadon modeled. Later Ms. Rifkah's interest in Valadon was reignited when she found one of Valadon's paintings at a Worcester yard sale.

Ms. Rifkah then talked about her second book of poetry, entitled, *Outcasts: The Penikese Island Leper Hospital 1905-1921*. She learned about this real-life hospital off the coast of Cape Cod from a PBS documentary. She showed us a PowerPoint presentation about the hospital, accompanied by short biographies of the 36 patients who were sent to the hospital for leprosy treatment. The book also contains these biographies, and the poems are written about the patients and their experiences at the hospital, including one woman giving birth, the excitement of the island receiving an electric generator in 1912, and the patients learning about the 1918 molasses disaster in nearby Boston.

Judy Finkel ended the evening by thanking the authors and giving them gifts of notecards, as well as memberships to WWHP for one year.

WOMEN IN PRINT 2012

Wed., March 7, 2012, 5:30pm—7:30pm

Worcester Public Library



Janette Greenwood

Jessica Bane Robert

Eve Rifkah

The Life of a North County Activist

Constance L. "Connie" Riley

Gardner native, community activist; 89

FITCHBURG -- Constance "Connie" L. Riley died at age 89 on September 23rd at The Highlands nursing home in Fitchburg. A native of Gardner, she moved to Fitchburg 12 years ago.

She was the daughter of James E. and Bernice (Timpany) Riley and the granddaughter of former Gardner mayor, James A. Timpany.

The mother of eight children, Connie graduated from Mount Wachusett Community College and UMass/ Amherst at ages 47 and 51, respectively. She was a founding member of the Fitchburg Women's Center and Womanspace in Gardner, working as a co-ordinator for both. She held positions as a community organizer/planner for Low Income Planning Aid, a delegate agency of the Montachusett Opportunity Council; the equal opportunity officer/executive assistant for Rural Housing Improvement agency in Winchendon; and the director of the Fitchburg/ Leominster Community Action Center.

Connie was an activist in the civil rights, peace and women's movements. She was recognized in the Greater Gardner AARP publication Greater Gardner Women Who Made a Difference.

She was co-founder of the Central Massachusetts Genealogical Society, creator of Montachusett Opportunity Council's Magic of Books program for distributing free books to low-income children, and a publicist of the achievements of Lucy Stone, nineteenth century women's rights leader. In 2006, as part of a clinical trial, Connie was one of the first people the United States to have a non-surgical aortic valve replacement.

Connie was a published poet and writer after taking writing courses in retirement. At age 86, she completed her first book, *Chair City of the World*, a chronicle of life in Gardner through several generations of her family's experience.

She belonged to the Westminster Great Books Discussion Group for many years, and was a member of the Worcester Friends Meeting.

Connie is survived by her children, Kathleen, James, David, Christopher, and Michael LaRoche and Mary Ellen Perry and Margaret Derezinski. Her son, Thomas LaRoche passed away in 2006. She also leaves her brother, Bernard "Red" Riley of Gardner; six grand-children; two great-grandchildren; several cousins, and a number of nieces and nephews. Her first and second husbands, Henry (Terry) LaRoche and Stig Miller, are deceased. A private service is planned. Donations in her honor may be made to Magic of Books, c/o Montachusett Opportunity Council, 133 Prichard Street, Fitchburg, MA 01420.

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Abby... (Continued from p3)

inductee Katherine Switzer, containing moisturizer and lipstick. The dinner was a delicious combination of salmon over rice, stuffed turkey, and vegetables, with tiramisu for dessert.

The induction ceremony began with the entrance of the Mount Olive Missionary Baptist Church Mass Choir, marching in to a rousing rendition of "This Little Light of Mine" and followed by the 2011 inductees. The choir also performed "The Star Spangled Banner," following the Presentation of the Colors and "Pledge of Allegiance," led by the Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways, Inc. This was followed by a welcome by Beverly P. Ryder, President of the NWHF Board of Directors, who introduced local News Anchor, Ginny Ryan, who conducted the Presentation of the Inductees in alphabetical order. There were many wonderful moments in the inductees' acceptance speeches, causing both laughter and tears. Of course, the proudest moment for the Worcester contingent was seeing Lynne McKenney Lydick, in costume as Abby Kelley Foster, make her acceptance speech in character, using many of Abby's own words. The most stirring moment was when she said in closing, "I did not come to make a speech. My life has been my speech."

One of the key lessons I took away from induction weekend is the reminder that one person truly can make a difference and ordinary women do extraordinary things every day. They don't do these things to win awards or to be inducted into halls of fame. They do them because they see a problem and have the determination to fix it, no matter what it takes. I think Katherine Switzer said it best at the end of her acceptance speech, "**It's as simple as putting one foot in front of the other.**"

Notes:

- WOMEN IN PRINT 2012 will be Wed., March 7, 5:30-7:30pm at Worcester Public Library. See next newsletter.
- WORCESTER LIVING magazine, Fall 2011, has a lengthy wonderful article by Pamela H. Sacks entitled, "On the trail of trailblazers: Seneca Falls pays homage to women's rights movement."
- "MEET ABBY KELLEY'S FAMILY AT LIBERTY FARM" which was postponed in May and June because of inclement weather is re-scheduled for May 2012. See next newsletter.
- A public program is being planned by Worcester Women's Oral History Project for December 2011.
- Worcester Women's Oral History Project has a new brochure.
- *Yours for Humanity* —Abby has a new brochure.
- Annual Meeting is Saturday, November 5, 2pm, Worcester Historical Museum, followed by speaker Joanne F. Goldstein, Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development for Massachusetts.
- Find WWHP on Facebook! 
- Check out NEWS AND EVENTS on www.wwhp.org for our events and other women-related events in the area.

“Visionary Women”

A Review by Kara Wilson

In celebration of Women’s History Month, the Master Singers of Worcester and Worcester Women’s History Project collaborated on a unique event entitled “Visionary Women: A Musical Celebration of Historic Women.” This event honored several New England women by setting their own words to music by contemporary composers. “Visionary Women” was performed on March 27, 2011, at Tuckerman Hall in Worcester to an audience of over 400.



Prior to the “Visionary Women” program, the Worcester County Poetry Association presented a free 30-minute lecture by Amy Belding Brown entitled “Emerson’s Oracles.” This lecture focused on ten women who had a profound influence on Ralph Waldo Emerson in 1840s Concord through being “visionary women” in their own right. According to Amy Belding Brown, these women “taught Emerson self-reliance and challenged his views on abolition and women’s rights,” but despite their influence, most have faded from public knowledge. The ten women highlighted in the lecture were: Mary Moody Emerson, Sarah Bradford Ripley, Lidian Emerson, Elizabeth Hoar, Abba Alcott, Lydia Maria Child, Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau, Mary Merritt Brooks, Elizabeth Potter Peabody, and Margaret Fuller.

Following the lecture, the audience adjourned upstairs to attend the “Visionary Women” performance and were greeted at the door by members of WWHP wearing 1850s era costumes. The audience received a concert program filled with information about the music, musicians, composers and sponsors. The program also included biographies of the poets whose works were set to music and full texts of the poems.

The concert opened with an introduction by Moira Rouse, President of Master Singers of Worcester. She mentioned how honored we were to have five of the composers in attendance at the performance. She also noted that the concert would feature mezzo-soprano soloist, D’Anna Fortunato. After the introduction, MSW began the first half of the concert, which included a tribute to the Worcester area’s own Lucy Stone and Abby Kelley Foster in the two-part piece entitled, “Two Portraits of Nineteenth Century New England Women.” The words of Lucy Stone were set to music by William Cutter and the words of Abby Kelley Foster were used in “The Call” by Martha Sullivan.

After intermission, WWHP President Fran Langille spoke to the audience, dressed in an 1850s costume. “This really is a singing day,” she exclaimed, before thanking MSW director Malcolm Halliday; the Massachusetts Cultural Council and Greater Worcester Community Foundation, whose generous grants helped to fund the program; and Penta Marketing, who sponsored the advertising banner for the concert. Ms. Langille also invited people to visit the WWHP table and announced Abby Kelley Foster’s upcoming induction into the National Women’s Hall of Fame, Seneca Falls, NY, on October 1 and into the National Abolition Hall of Fame, Peterboro, New York, on October 22.



CJ Posk, Kara Wilson, Linda Miller



Lynne McKenney Lydick, Fran Langille



Fran Langille, WWHP Pres.
Master Singers of Worcester
Olga Rogach, Pianist

October 1, 2011, Induction Ceremony at National Women's Hall of Fame



Christine M. Moulton, NWHF Executive Director
Lynne McKenney Lydick
Beverly P. Ryder, NWHF Board President



Lynne McKenney Lydick giving acceptance speech for Abby Kelley Foster



Lynne McKenney Lydick shaking hands with Dr. Bernice A. King, daughter of Coretta Scott King



WORCESTER WOMEN'S HISTORY PROJECT

We remember our past . . . to better shape our future.

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To renew or join, please complete this form.

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Abby Kelley Foster Induction into
NATIONAL ABOLITION HALL OF FAME
Saturday, October 22, 2011
Colgate University in Hamilton, New York

The National Abolition
Hall of Fame & Museum
Peterboro, NY

