



WORCESTER WOMEN'S HISTORY PROJECT

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



WWHP VOLUME 12, NO. 1

SPRING 2012

Abby Kelley Foster inducted into the National Abolition Hall of Fame and Museum

By Carolyn Howe, past WWHP President

The dual inductions of Abby Kelley Foster into the National Women's Hall of Fame (October 2, 2011) and the National Abolition Hall of Fame and Museum (October 22, 2011) underscore the two driving moral causes that motivated Abby's life: equality between the sexes and the abolition of slavery – with full racial equality.

It was the combination of these issues, gender equality and racial equality, that inspired me, and many others, to join in creating the Worcester Women's History Project in 1994, with the goal of commemorating, "in the year 2000," the 150th anniversary of the very first National Woman's Rights Convention, which was held in Worcester in October, 1850. At that first national convention, a suffrage resolution was passed, declaring that banners should proclaim "equality before the law, without distinction of sex or color." These words became a motto for the WWHP.

A second resolution was a powerful inspiration for all the hard work that lay ahead as we planned for the 150th anniversary commemoration of the only national woman's rights convention that called for women's rights without distinction of color.

Resolved, That the cause we are met to advocate, — the claim for woman of all her natural and civil rights, — bids us remember the million and a half of slave women at the South, the most grossly wronged and foully outraged

of all women; and in every effort for an improvement in our civilization, we will bear in our heart of hearts the memory of the trampled womanhood of the plantation, and omit no effort to raise it to a share in the rights we claim for ourselves.

For me, going to Peterboro, New York, was a poignant finale to our work begun in 1994 and a fitting beginning of renewed commitment; it was like coming full-circle. In the 1990s, I, along with everyone else, had a lot to learn about Abby Kelley Foster, the abolitionist movement, and the woman's rights movement. The more I learned, the more I was drawn to Abby, a woman who viewed the liberation of slave women (and men) as having greater moral urgency than did her own and her daughter's moral claim to full equality with men. Now here I was, going with a small group of WWHP members to Peterboro, New York, to help induct Abby into the National Abolition Hall of Fame and Museum (NAHOF). She had just been inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame, after more than a decade of advocacy by WWHP members. A white abolitionist in the women's hall of fame! And now, a staunch women's rights advocate in the abolition hall of fame!

On Friday, October 21, 2011, Doreen Velnich drove Fran Langille and me, and once we got through Albany, we drove on a state highway over hills, into valleys, through little towns, and past small farms — a landscape Abby would have travelled many times. We connected with Mary

(Cont'd on p3)



National Abolition Hall of Fame
Peterboro, New York

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**MARCH IS...
MEMBERSHIP MONTH**

**RENEW OR JOIN!
using the form on the
last page.**

Thank you.

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." Its mission is to

- 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 Friends of Worcester Women's History Project (WWHPers),

Spring is nearly upon us. I think it's great timing that the first day of spring falls in the middle of women's history month – it's a time for renewed energy and growth, taking a fresh look at your surroundings, emerging from your winter shell. We've got plenty going on to tap into that positive energy and help you flourish as a woman making history here in Worcester. I'm honored to be taking the reins as president this year, and pleased to be able to share with you here a bit of the excitement being generated by the marvelous women on our steering committee and working groups. Will this be the spring you get more involved?

This year the theme for Women's History Month is "**Women's Education – Women's Empowerment.**" This theme resonates strongly with the vision of WWHP "to celebrate and document women's contributions to the history, social fabric, and culture of Worcester and beyond."

Through programs and initiatives, we work to shine a light on the amazing stories of local women's involvement in work, education, health and political/community engagement — looking at women of the past like Abby Kelley Foster, but also women of the present, as highlighted in the terrific new compilation of excerpts from some of the 200+ oral histories we've collected through the Worcester Women's Oral History Project (WWOHP) initiative. We're so grateful to and proud of the WWOHP co-chairs, Charlene Martin and Maureen Ryan Doyle, for the success of their book in bringing attention to these powerful stories. Be sure to read the article in this newsletter describing the book launch event at the Library last December. The WWOHP group are also planning a public workshop for May 9 – see details on page 4.

We kick off Women's History Month with the 9th annual **WOMEN IN PRINT** event on March 7. This event is featured on page 7 with the design by new Steering Committee member Hayley Gleason. Come early if you want a seat, as we've been known to pack the place!

March is also MEMBERSHIP MONTH, so it's time to renew your own membership and think about getting one for a friend. Membership in WWHP is a terrific choice for thoughtful women on your gift lists – whether to celebrate a birthday, Mother's Day, Administrative Professionals Day, Easter, or Equinox – especially when presented in combination with the *Voices of Worcester Women* book. (See form on back page.)

There's plenty more on tap this spring. We've been invited to join **Abby Kelley Foster at Liberty Farm on Sat., May 19** to celebrate her daughter Alla's birthday. Watch the website for details. Abby's been trailblazing on the national level this year, so you'll want to see her while she's here and catch up on the news of her travels far and near, including a performance in the Connecticut

(Cont'd on p11)

Abby ... (Cont'd from p1)



Unveiling of Abby Kelley Foster portrait created by artist Joseph Flores

and Bruce Plummer at our motel in Oneida, then drove into Hamilton for dinner and to Colgate University's planetarium, where we sat surrounded by a film about the Mayan people's temples and astrological predictions.

On induction day, we met up with Tom and Lynne McKenney Lydick at Colgate University. A large exhibit on anti-slavery history filled the hall where the NAHOF hosted a morning reception. It gave me chills to realize that everybody there was committed to preserving the memory of the inductees and the thousands of unnamed people who dedicated and sacrificed their lives to end the heinous atrocity of slavery.

"Dot Willsey and the staff of NAHOF were so gracious and welcoming to us." said WWHP then-president Fran Langille. "I bought an Abby pin to wear. I think Doreen bought enough Abby cards to give to everyone who attended our WWHP annual meeting! And she wiped out the NAHOF supply of Abby pins!"

Throughout the day, several scholars spoke about key people or issues in the abolitionist movement. We were delighted to meet historian Stacey Robertson — another Abby fan — who spoke about the huge influence Abby had in the "western" states of Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan. Until hearing Stacey's lecture, I had no idea just how successful Abby had been in organizing so many women, who themselves became lecturers and organizers. Abby was, truly, the most effective organizer and fundraiser for the American Anti-Slavery Society.

The induction ceremony took place after dinner. For each of the three people being inducted (Abby Kelley Foster, Jermain Wesley Loguen, and



Above photo:
LYNNE MCKENNEY LYDICK;
Gregg Tripoli, Executive Director
Onondaga Historical Association,
Syracuse NY; Jean Cooper,
great grand-daughter of George
Gavin Ritchie, Newtown PA;
FRAN LANGILLE

Top: WWHP VP Doreen Velnich, WWHP Pres. Fran Langille, WWHP Clerk Mary Plummer. Seated: Carolyn Howe, who nominated AKF, and Lynne McKenney Lydick, who accepted the award and who portrayed Abby Kelley Foster in *Yours for Humanity—Abby*.

George Gavin Ritchie), the format included a presentation to represent the life and contributions of the nominee followed by formal nominations; at the end of the program, nominators stood by sheet-draped frames and then ceremoniously unveiled black and white portraits of each inductee.

Abby was first on the agenda, so the evening began with one of the best performances I have ever seen of Lynne portraying Abby in *Yours for Humanity—Abby*. [*Yours for Humanity—Abby* was written for the Worcester Women's History Project by Carolyn Howe and Karen Board Moran.] The audience was clearly moved by the performance. I was proud to make the five-minute formal induction nomination. In my remarks, I turned to Abby (a.k.a. Lynne); these are some of the words I spoke to her:

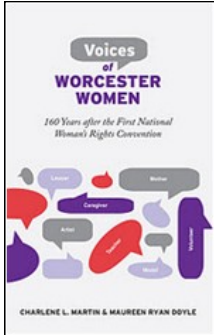
Abby — we are humbled to be here in your presence, and to have you witness one of our deepest missions: to have your memory, and your legacy, given the recognition- and place in history that you deserve.

You deserve this honor, Abby. But we here — and the men, women, and children across this nation — also deserve to have your memory and legacy preserved. As a young teenager passionate about the Civil Rights Movement, I needed you, Abby! I needed to know that you, a white woman, who worked against slavery until you dropped from sickness and exhaustion — you were also deeply committed to full racial equality. I, and so many others, needed the role model of Abby Kelley, and do we need you now, for as you said, nothing is finished while so much is left to be done. (Cont'd on p11)



Voices of Worcester Women Heard at Book Launch

By Maureen Ryan Doyle



Over one hundred and fifty people jammed the Saxe Room of the Worcester Public Library and others lined up in the hall and doorway to attend the book launch of *Voices of Worcester Women: 160 Years after the First National Woman's Rights Convention* on December 6. The book is the work of Charlene L. Martin and Maureen Ryan Doyle, Co-Chairpersons of the Worcester Women's

Oral History Project (WWOHP), and is the result of 18 months of writing and research.

Since its inception in 2005 under the leadership of Linda Burlingame Rosenlund, WWOHP has collected the oral histories of over 250 Worcester area women. Many of the stories that have been recorded and documented are of women whose voices may have been previously omitted from the historical record. The permanent repository for the files is the Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America at the Radcliffe Institute at Harvard University. The files are available to historians and researchers from around the world. Many of the oral histories are also available on the Worcester Women's History Project website, www.wwhp.org. However, Martin and Doyle wanted to make those stories accessible to an even wider audience.

As Co-Chairs of WWOHP as well as friends, they decided to research the histories and excerpt many of them for their work. The book provides a glimpse into the lives of some fascinating Worcester women and is divided into five chapters. Four of those chapters reflect the spirit of the First National Woman's Rights Convention that was held in Worcester in 1850. Those chapters focus on Education, Work, Health, and Politics/Community Involvement. A fifth chapter is entitled *Uniquely Worcester Remembrances*. The excerpts in *Voices of Worcester Women* are from stories of women representing diverse ethnic, socioeconomic, and religious backgrounds. They range in age from 18 to 103. Although each woman's story is truly her own, readers will find much to appreciate in the sharing of their everyday lives, their goals and dreams, their challenges and successes. Whether reading about the first female professor at a formerly all-male college, a cancer survivor, or a motorcycle-riding nun, these stories are a snapshot of the lives of extraordinary, ordinary women of Worcester.

The Worcester Women's Oral History Project records, collects, and shares the personal and historical memories of women throughout 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.

Oral History Community Workshop scheduled for

May 9, 5:30-7:30, Worcester Public Library

By Maureen Ryan Doyle, WWOHP Steering Committee member and Co-Chair of Oral History Project (with Charlene Martin)

Have you ever wondered how to conduct an oral history? Would you like to preserve the memories of relatives for a family history? Are you a teacher who is thinking about incorporating oral history into your classroom? If you answered yes to any of these questions, please join us for a free Oral History Community Workshop. Presenters from the Worcester Women's Oral History Project (WWOHP) will discuss many topics, including proper preparation for an interview, required legal documents, recording devices, and transcription of the interview. A question and answer session will follow the presentation. Authors and Co-Chairs of WWOHP, Charlene L. Martin and Maureen Ryan Doyle will also offer a reading from their book, *Voices of Worcester Women: 160 Years after the First National Woman's Rights Convention*.

For further information, please contact Charlene L. Martin at chmartin@townisp.com or Maureen Ryan Doyle at mryandoyle@aol.com.

Voices of Worcester Women: 160 Years after the First National Woman's Rights Convention is available for purchase at the Worcester Women's History Project, Worcester Historical Museum, Campus Store at Assumption College, Amazon.com and BarnesandNoble.com. The authors are available for readings and book signings. You may contact them at chmartin@townisp.com and mryandoyle@aol.com.

You can also learn more at
<http://voicesofworcesterwomen.blogspot.com>.

Clara (Clarinda) Cramond Fish Roberts

3 Sep 1876-26 Oct 1965

Introductory note from WWHP member Karen Board Moran who moved to Arizona in 2005 —

Yesterday (January 14, 2012), I debuted my new AZ historic character Clara Fish Roberts (1876-1965) at the AAUW Tucson luncheon to celebrate AZ statehood in 1912. I always thought equal suffrage was in the 1912 AZ Constitution, but discovered it was not gained until an initiative referendum passed on Nov. 5 that year. Now, I'm in search of who the first women voters were--especially the Mexican Americans who were gradually being shoved aside by the newcomer Anglos. I have confirmed that Clara was the first Tucson woman to register to vote on Monday, March 17, 1913. It had taken the AZ legislature until March 12 to pass the law allowing women to register--long debating whether women would be required to state their exact age. Clara was allowed to state she was "over 21". Lots more to learn...

Clara Fish Roberts, founder of the Collegiate Club of Tucson (now the American Association of University Women), reminisces on its early years from 1909-1913. She is portrayed by Karen Board Moran, past WWHP Board member, to celebrate Arizona's centennial year of statehood.

Clara's parents were among the many New Englanders seeking adventure and economic security in the west during the mid 19th century. In 1873 her mother, Maria Wakefield Fish, became Tucson's first professional female school teacher, but quickly married since there were few single Anglo women in Tucson at the time. Born in upstate New York three years before the Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention, her parents migrated west to Minnesota to homestead. Her grandfather was Solomon Brown, the man widely reputed to have fired the first shot of the Revolutionary War, the "shot heard round the world", at Lexington, Massachusetts.

Her father, Edward Nye Fish of Bedford, Massachusetts, had joined with twenty friends to build and dismantle wood homes, transport them around the Horn to San Francisco and then reassemble them to sell to 49ers. His share of the profits was used to start many successful enterprises both in California and Arizona.

Clara, the first student to register at the University of Arizona in September 1891, went on to teach in

Tucson and Northern Arizona Normal College before her marriage to Frederick Roberts. Among her many accomplishments was her election as the first woman on the Tucson School Board in 1917-1919.

Clara and her parents helped Americanize Tucson, a presidio and trading center in the Gadsden Purchase of 1854. Clara was part of the women's network which made Arizona the ninth state where women had the elective franchise at the time. Clara Fish Roberts helped change her community and the role of women before and following Arizona statehood on February 14, 1912.



Karen Board Moran as
Clara Fish Roberts

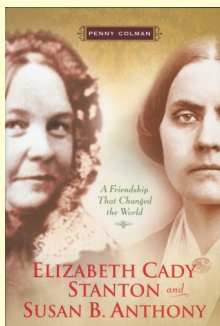
WWHP GOALS:

- identify, recognize, and mark sites important in the history of women's contributions to society
- disseminate historically significant information through public programming (events, symposia, and publications)
- facilitate the incorporation of women's contributions within the historical record
- develop and incorporate curriculum and scholarship related to women's history
- maintain financial stability to ensure the continued capability to achieve these goals

Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: A Friendship That Changed the World

Author: Penny Colman

A Book Review by WWHP member, Kara Wilson



One of the highlights of the National Women's Hall of Fame Induction Weekend in Seneca Falls, New York, was having the opportunity to meet Penny Colman and attending a lecture on her new book, *Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: A Friendship That Changed the World*. Among Penny Colman's prior publications are

two books about women with ties to Worcester: Dorothea Lynde Dix and Frances Perkins. Ms. Colman once visited the Frances Perkins Library in Worcester to lecture on her book about Perkins and so enthusiastically acknowledged the large Worcester contingent in her audience in Seneca Falls.

Ms. Colman discussed her research process while writing the book, which included assistance from Elizabeth Cady Stanton's great-great-granddaughter, Coline Jenkins, who was in the audience at the lecture. Another part of Ms. Colman's research involved driving 880 miles in three days to visit important landmarks in the lives of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. Ms. Colman showed us a PowerPoint slideshow of pictures of these landmarks and she lists them at the end of the book, in case the reader would like to have a first-hand look at the places mentioned in the book. Ms. Colman also mentioned that she conducts tours of sites relevant to women's history in New York City. I felt as if we were being treated to a mini-virtual tour through her PowerPoint presentation.

After receiving my own autographed copy of *Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: A Friendship That Changed the World* following the lecture, I could not wait to begin reading. The book certainly did not disappoint. I appreciated how Penny Colman structured the book chronologically and that the first part (Chapters 1-8) had the odd-numbered chapters strictly focused on Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the even chapters about Susan B. Anthony. In Chapter 9, we arrive at 1851, when the two women are introduced in Seneca Falls by Amelia Bloomer, so from that point onward, the book is centered around their friendship and collaborative work, with each chapter involving both women.

I admired how thoroughly Ms. Colman researched the lives of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony in preparation for writing the book. She uses numerous quotes from letters, speeches, articles, and diary entries, so the reader gets to hear the story of these women and their friendship in their own words, making them seem to come alive. It's hard not to get caught up in their passion and commitment to the fight for women's rights as the reader sees Miss Anthony traveling tirelessly even into her eighties to places all over the world, bringing with her impassioned letters and speeches written by Mrs. Stanton to deliver at conventions.

There were many quotes from both women that were alternately stirring and touching, but I'd like to share one of my favorites. At the age of 78 in 1898, Susan B. Anthony was outraged at a recent U.S. Congressional decision to restrict voting rights to men in the territories won in the Spanish-American War. She also was deeply concerned that the women of the future would not pick up the fight for women's rights once she and Elizabeth Cady Stanton were gone. In a letter to Clara Berwick Colby she wrote: "I really believe I shall explode if some of you young women don't wake up and raise your voices in protest...I wonder if when I am under the sod — or cremated and floating in the air — I shall have to stir you and others up. How can you not be on fire?"

I believe Susan B. Anthony would be proud to know that organizations such as WWHP are still thriving more than 100 years after her death. She is still stirring us up and we are on fire to continue the work our foremothers started!

For more information about Penny Colman, you can visit her website www.pennycolman.com.

COMMEMORATION WEEKEND TO HONOR INDUCTIONS

Mark the weekend of October 19, 2012 and join us at Colgate University and in Peterboro, New York, for the Commemoration Weekend festivities to honor Abby Kelley Foster's 2011 induction into the National Abolition Hall of Fame. Lynne McKenney Lydick and Carolyn Howe will run the symposium and participate in the panel discussion. Don't miss the honor of witnessing the unveiling of Abby's banner in the Hall of Fame. www.abolitionhof.org



WORCESTER WOMEN'S HISTORY PROJECT

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

Women and War

*Gender Identity and Activism
in Times of Conflict*



Joyce P. Kaufman and Kristen P. Williams



Kristin Waters and Carol B. Conaway
EDITORS



Black Women's
Intellectual Traditions

Speaking Their Minds

WOMEN IN PRINT

Wed., March 7, 2012

(Snow date: March 21)

5:30 PM-7:30 PM

**Worcester Public Library
Saxe Room
3 Salem Square
Worcester, MA**

Free & Open to the Public

www.wwhp.org

Join us for an evening with three local authors!

THEA ASCHKENASE, holocaust survivor and a graduate of Worcester State University speaking about her memoirs

KRISTEN P. WILLIAMS, Ph.D., Professor of Political Science at Clark University, speaking on *Women and War: Gender Identity and Activism in Times of Conflict*, a book she co-authored with Joyce P. Kaufman

KRISTIN B. WATERS, Ph.D., Professor of Philosophy, Worcester State University; and Resident Scholar, Women's Studies Research Center, Brandeis University, speaking on her book *Black Women's Intellectual Traditions: Speaking Their Minds*, co-edited with Carol B. Conaway

Abby Kelley Foster is back and WELCOMED, this time!

By Lynne McKenney Lydick

On November 30, 2011 Abby Kelley Foster was welcomed by the residents of Washington, CT, Stephen Bartkus, Curator, Gunn Memorial Library and Museum, and the FEMALE pastor of the First Congregational Church, The Rev. Cheryl P. Anderson.

As I sat in the church, perhaps in the very same pew as 29-year-old

Abby sat one morning in September 1840, I was ready to bring her full circle.

I felt her presence and her undying spirit as holding back my tears, I listened to Pastor Anderson quote the words that Rev. Hayes had spoken 171 years prior.



From Dorothy Sterling's book, *Ahead of Her Time: Abby Kelley and the Politics of Antislavery*. (Page 117)

"Rev. Gordon Hayes announced that he had been asked to read a notice of a meeting in which a woman would address a mixed audience." He quoted St. Paul, it is "a sin and a shame for women to teach men" and added that the woman in question was a non-resistant who advocated doctrines "which would open our prisons, prevent the collection of taxes and give unrestrained sway to lawless violence." He continued...from Revelation "...thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication."

"He went on ...now a Jezebel had come to Washington "with brazen face" and "fascinations exceeding those of her



Scriptural prototype" ...she was "a servant of Satan in the garb of an angel of light" and her aim was "to entice and destroy this church." Abby sat in stunned silence as he called her by name, cited as proof her "vile character" as she traveled "by night and day, always with men and never with women." He concluded by asking the congregation whether she should be permitted to speak in the church. It took only a few minutes to pass a resolution disapproving of "the introduction of female lecturers."

Those words burned in Abby's heart for the rest of her life. Her friend, Elizabeth Buffum Chace, remembered "the trembling of her voice, the quivering of her lips and the tears in her eyes as she related the insults, the unkindness and the cruel scandals that were heaped upon her." But stalwart Abby held a meeting that night though her audience was "small indeed" and her address "short and heavy with grief." Nothing stopped her, ever, neither verbal nor physical harassment, from speaking on behalf of her sisters and brothers in chains.

I am overwhelmed by her courage and the strength of her commitment. She lives on as a role model of self-sacrifice, determination and perseverance in the face of injustice. And in March, Women's History Month, we must remember the women upon whose shoulders we all stand and thank them for their commitment to humanity.

Abby's Letters at Worcester Historical Museum

A Scholar in Residence grant was submitted to the massHUMANITIES to fund a project entitled *Yours for Humanity: Abby Kelley Foster Letters*. Should the grant be approved, Dr. William Casey King will transcribe, edit and annotate Abby's letters in the Worcester Historical Museum's collection. Professor John Stauffer Chair, American Civilization Program at Harvard will lend his expertise. At the end of this six-month project, which will begin in September 2012, the letters will be ready for the next step. Currently both online publication and an edited volume are being evaluated. Lynne McKenney Lydick and Carolyn Howe will be assisting in this exciting project. Keep your fingers crossed!

Upcoming Yours for Humanity-Abby performances

During the last week of Black History Month, Abby performed at five Worcester Public Schools. Four school performances were funded as part of Elizabeth Bacon's *This is MyCity!*, a 21st Century School grant program.

On March 1, Abby will appear at Venerini Academy for a collaborative program with the Academy, the Worcester Senior Center and Abby's House. This performance is supported in part by a grant from the Worcester Arts Council, a local agency supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

On March 30, YFH-A will be appearing at the Huntington Public Library, MA. This program is supported in part by a grant from the Huntington Cultural Council, a local agency supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

WWHP Women in “No Evil Project” Exhibit at the Hanover Theatre

Review by Fran Langille, past WWHP President

“Old news” is “good news” when reporting about the December 5, 2011, opening reception for the “No Evil Project” banners at the Hanover Theatre for the Performing Arts. Several WWHP Steering Committee members are pictured on the banners and some were on hand for the opening reception, including Jeana Edmonds, Beth Harding, her daughter Megan, Dianne Bruce and WWHP past President, Fran Langille (pictured in photo below).

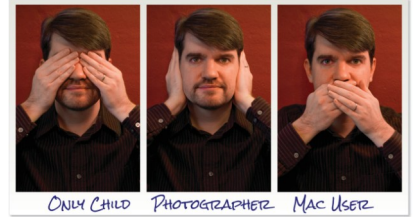
The exhibit is the “brain child” of Troy B. Thompson, photographer, owner of Daedal Creations and creator of the Social Web (www.socialweb.net). Troy has assisted many local non-profits in designing and updating their websites, including WWHP’s. Now he’s blended his creativity, computer skills and photography to create the “No Evil Project” and launched his first exhibit at the Hanover Theatre! “Why not start out big”, says Troy, and indeed he has, with three banners, one 13’ 8” wide x 19’ 6” high and two at 5’ 8” wide x 19’ 6” high!!

The Hanover Theatre seems a most fitting location for the premiere of this unique exhibit. The Hanover was re-opened in 2008 after being restored to its former glory at a cost of \$31 million. The original Franklin Square Theatre, built in 1904 as a vaudeville house, was redesigned in 1926 in the “grand tradition of the most ornate film theaters of the day” by architect Thomas Lamb (He later designed the Boston Opera House.). It became known as the “Poli Palace.” On the second level lobby of the theatre, Lamb created the “promenade” and installed mirrors on the opposite wall to reflect the images of those attending the theatre. It has been said that when asked why there were mirrors instead of

windows looking out over the city Lamb responded that the people are the city and he wanted them to view their reflections as they walk along the promenade.

In like fashion, the “No Evil Project” is a reflection of people of the city and in its own unique way celebrates their diversity. Troy is quoted in an article in “Pulse Magazine” as saying: “The collection is a positive message that shows a variety of people doing good in their community.”

The exhibit contains sets of 250 people and includes an interactive 23-inch touchscreen kiosk which allows visitors to learn more about the people in the exhibit. See the “No Evil Project” at www.noevilproject.com.



Troy B. Thompson and “No Evil Project” banners, Hanover Theatre

“I don’t believe the majority of people out there are evil or that they think others are. I believe a variety of ideas and experiences leads to stronger, more vibrant communities and better solutions to the problems we face. **We should be proud of our differences and how we contribute to society, rather than trying to blend in.**”

Troy B. Thompson

This premiere exhibit was partially funded by the Greater Worcester Community Foundation. Donations (tax-deductible) are still accepted and may be made through the Hanover Theatre to fund and expand the project at www.noevilproject.com/how-help/donations.

The WWHP women in the display are Fran Langille, Mary Plummer, Regina Edmonds, Louise Gleason, Charlene Martin, Maureen Ryan Doyle, Hanna Solska, Dianne Bruce & Nancy Avila.

Fran Langille & Harding family



Pencil shavings: Memoirs

Author: Olive Higgins Prouty

Olive Higgins, who was born and raised in Worcester, MA was a 1904 graduate of Smith College and after she married Louis Prouty in 1907, they moved to Brookline, MA in 1908. Olive married Lewis Prouty in 1907; they had four children, two of whom predeceased their mother. Her children included Olivia, Richard and Jane. Prouty wrote her last novel in 1951, the year of her husband's death. For the rest of her life she lived quietly in the house in Brookline, Massachusetts, where she had moved in 1913. In old age she found comfort in her friendships, her charitable work, and the Unitarian church, First Parish in Brookline, which the Proutys had joined in the early 1920s. From *Wikipedia*

A book review by Louise Gleason, WWHP Steering Committee member

I found this book at the WWHP library. The title intrigued me. Who was Olive Higgins Prouty and what could *Pencil Shavings: Memoirs* be about?

Olive Higgins Prouty, a Worcesterite, was a celebrated author of the twentieth century. She wrote in the “pulp fiction” genre. (Pulp fiction was the term given to creative writing of the early 1900s. It came from the low quality paper that was used in publishing these writings. The books had very artistic colorful covers and were inexpensive, usually costing 10 cents.) Two of Olive's most famous novels are *Now, Voyager* (1941) and *Stella Dallas* (1922). Both became hit movies with remakes. *Stella Dallas*, although Olive never authorized its use as a radio program, became a very popular “soap opera.”

Pencil shavings: Memoirs is described as a “remarkable document which chronicles the struggle of one of the first women who ‘tried to do it all’ — combining a successful literary career and a ‘normal’ married woman active in her community. It is a memoir.” So as memoirs go, some part is fact (and Olive meticulously researched her facts) and some of it is the influence of time on memory.

The chapters of her childhood are rich with historical information of the lives of one of the leading families of Worcester, the Higgins. She writes about who they were, how they shaped Worcester and most importantly and interestingly how they interacted with each other. Life was not ordinary. Milton Prince Higgins, her father and a New Hampshire farmer's son, had a close relationship with Ichabod Washburn, a Worcester industrialist and founder of WPI. Their quest to establish Worcester as a leading manufacturing and education center consumed their lives and greatly influenced the Higgins family. As a result, little attention was given to frivolity. By the age of sixteen, Olive had never had a birthday party nor had the family had a Christmas tree. However, there was true warmth and love of the Higgins children —Aldus, John, Katherine

and Olive. Milton and Katherine (Olive's mother) were deeply interested in their children's well-being and achievements.

Olive attended Worcester schools and went on to Smith College. At Smith she chose not to take the “scholarly” courses —math, history. Her love of literature and writing bloomed. She had a few friends and loved the solitude of “a room of her own.” A few years after graduation, she married Lewis Prouty. The Proutys were a prominent shoe manufacturing family from Spencer, Massachusetts. In fact, they were the leading manufacturer of shoes in the world.

Olive's struggle develops after her marriage and after she became a mother. Her “New England conscience” as described by Dr. Austen Riggs pressured her “to do it all”, and if not, she would be a failure. This mind set coupled with the death of two of her children precipitated her depression which lasted two long years. Yet with the help of Dr. Riggs, she triumphed with a new respect of “self.”

This was a wonderful book not only because of its rich family and Worcester history but also for the life story of Olive Higgins Prouty.

Note: *Now Voyager* and *Stella Dallas* are excellent examples of Olive's literary ability and style. The stories are set and written in another era. Both novels deal with the universal theme — the mother or mother figure and daughter relationship.

Yours for Humanity —Abby

Report by Beth Harding, WWHP Steering Committee member and chair of YFH-A

This fall was a busy one for *Yours for Humanity — Abby*. The inductions of Abby Kelley Foster into the National Woman's Hall of Fame and the National Abolition Hall of Fame stand in their own right as wonderful acknowledgments for the tireless work Abby Kelley Foster did for women's rights and for abolition. They also show the hard work of Lynne McKenney Lydick, whom we greatly thank for her performances as Abby and also for her endless pursuit to have as many people as possible know about Abby's work and life.

Abby and WWHP were introduced, re-introduced, seen or seen again by 3,355 people in 2011 alone! People of all ages, 5 – 95, and from across the country, including CA, TX, CT, NY, RI, IL, IN, MA, MD, PA, Washington, D.C., NJ, AL, FL, and GA, (and who knows what other states were represented at the NWHF Induction) for a total of 14 states and D.C.!

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

was held Saturday, November 5, 2011, 2:00 P.M., at the Worcester Historical Museum. President Fran Langille opened the meeting. The minutes of the last Annual Meeting held Oct. 23, 2010, were approved, as was the Treasurer's report for fy11. The fy12 budget was approved. Election of Officers, new Steering Committee members, and Nominating Committee members was held. The results of the elections are indicated in the panel on page 2. New to the Steering Committee to serve for three years are Heather-Lyn Haley, president; Kathleen Comer, treasurer; Hayley Gleason, Louise Gleason, Carol Harvey, Kayla Haveles, C.J. Posk. Re-elected to the Steering Committee was C.J. Posk. Re-elected as VP was Doreen Velnich; as clerk, Mary Plummer. Elected to Nominating Committee: Heather-Lyn Haley, Regina Edmonds, Judy Finkel, Barbara Kohin and Fran Langille.

Following the meeting, Lynne McKenney Lydick gave an interesting and informative talk on the topic: "Abby Kelley Foster: The Infamous and Famous." Lynne arranged to show a clip from a video of the NWHF inductions in which she gave the acceptance speech. A decorated cake congratulating Abby on her inductions into the National Women's Hall of Fame (10.1.11) and National Abolition Hall of Fame (10.22.11) was enjoyed. Gifts from those who attended the inductions were given to Steering Committee members.

President's Message *(Cont'd from p2)*

church where the real Abby was driven out by angry crowds in 1840.

You'll find us out in the community at **stART on the Street** June 3 on Green Street, quilling with the kids while we're spreading the word about Abby, the first national woman's rights convention and our current initiatives. And planning is well underway for the annual women's history field trip, June 9, this year to the Quincy home of Abigail Adams, a brilliant Massachusetts woman who shaped history with her ideas and writings much like Abby Kelley Foster and also to the JFK Presidential Library and Museum for the exhibit on Jacqueline Kennedy's 1964 oral history.

Now is the time to waken from your winter slumber. Attend an event, join a working group, get more involved. Hope to see you out there —

Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce The Breakfast Club Salute to Abby Kelley Foster November 3, 2011



The Breakfast Club recognized Abby Kelley Foster for her inductions into the National Women's Hall of Fame and National Abolition Hall of Fame. In a break from protocol, symbolizing

this significant achievement and the impact Abby continues to have, Lynne McKenney Lydick was invited to address the attendees, which included 400 area professionals and community leaders. Lynne, in period costume, spoke in Abby's words as she passionately shared "...our daughters...must enter into business...I talk to them, and urge them to open shops...when woman shall feel it is her duty to do this she will get rights...My friends, I did not rise to make a speech—my life has been my speech. Bloody feet, sisters, bloody feet have worn smooth the path by which you have come up hither."

Report by Linda Rosenlund, past WWHP President



Abby ... *(Cont'd from p3)*

I think I speak for many women...when I say that we needed you in our twenties, when, like you, we were struggling to find, and trust, and know the power of our women's voices... You simply claimed that you were equal to men, and claimed your right to speak in public venues about the evils of slavery...

Your life challenges those of us "...who share your passion for equality and justice to use your life's example for strength" to carry on your legacy – to do something, whatever our life circumstances allow, to help create a more equitable, just, and sorely needed compassionate society.

And so, Abby, ...we come here from the city you made your home, Worcester, Massachusetts, to nominate you for induction into the National Abolition Hall of Fame and Museum. We are forever — yours, for humanity.

Coming up this spring with WWHP

Wed., March 7, 5:30pm—WOMEN IN PRINT 2012, Worcester Public Library—see p7

Thur., May 9, 5:30pm—ORAL HISTORY COMMUNITY WORKSHOP, Worcester Public Library—see p4

Sat., May 19, 2-5:00pm—*You are invited to meet* ABBY KELLEY FOSTER'S FAMILY AT LIBERTY FARM —
In Worcester, celebrating daughter Alla's 165th birthday—family activities—more info in April

Sat., June 9, day-long annual educational trip: Adams National Historical Park in Quincy and The John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, Columbia Point, Boston, for the new exhibit, *In Her Voice: Jacqueline Kennedy, The White House Years* (an oral history)—lunch at a fine Marina Bay restaurant—suggested reading: *My Dearest Friend: Letters of Abigail and John Adams*; *First Family: Abigail and John Adams* by Joseph J. Ellis; *Abigail Adams* by Woody Holton; *John Adams* by David McCullough—more info in April—Discount to members. Call 508-767-1852.

Check www.wwhp.org for event updates and area women's NEWS AND EVENTS



WORCESTER WOMEN'S HISTORY PROJECT

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

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MASSACHUSETTS CULTURAL COUNCIL
Fiscal Year 2012 Grants to Worcester County
(as of 9/19/2011)
Worcester Women's History Project, Inc.
to expand the recording and sharing of oral history on
the continuing role Central Massachusetts women
have played since the first National Woman's Rights
Convention in Worcester, 1850. \$2,500

