



# WORCESTER WOMEN'S HISTORY PROJECT

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

WWHP VOL. 13, NO. 2

FALL 2013

WWHP and the Intergenerational Urban Institute at  
Worcester State University are pleased to

*present*

**Michèle LaRue**

*in*

*Someone Must Wash the Dishes:*

*An Anti-Suffrage Satire*

Many women fought *against* getting the vote in the early 1900s, but none with more charm, prettier clothes—and less logic—than the fictional speaker in this satiric monologue written by pro-suffragist Marie Jenney Howe, back in 1912. “Woman suffrage is the reform against nature,” declares Howe’s unlikely, but irresistibly likeable, heroine.

“Ladies, get what you want. Pound pillows. Make a scene. Make home a hell on earth—but do it in a *womanly* way! That is so much more dignified and refined than walking up to a ballot box and dropping in a piece of paper!”

Reviewers have called this production “wicked” in its wit, and have labeled Michèle LaRue’s performance “side-splitting.” An Illinois native, now based in New York, LaRue is a professional actress who tours nationally with a repertoire of shows by turn-of-the-previous-century American writers.



*Photo by Ken Smith of Quiet Heart Images*

**Panel Discussion follows on the unfinished business of women’s rights.**

**Thursday, November 7, 2013, at 6:00 p.m.**

**Worcester State University’s STUDENT CENTER Blue Lounge\***

**486 Chandler Street, Worcester**

Pro-Suffragist **Marie Jenney Howe** wrote *Someone Must Wash the Dishes* in 1912. Titled “An Anti-Suffrage Monologue,” it was published in 1913, by the National American Woman Suffrage Association (precursor of the League of Women Voters). This production was directed by **Warren Kliever** for New Jersey’s The East Lynne Company—which he founded to revive American plays and literature of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

*Dishes* premiered in March 1994, at New York City’s 4th-annual Women-kind Festival. Presenters in 13 states range from Chicago’s Newberry Library to New York’s Mohonk Mountain House, and include universities and colleges, museums and historical societies, women’s clubs, active adult communities, theatre companies, corporations, and conferences.

**TICKETS: \$15** Order ahead of time by mailing a check payable to Worcester Women’s History Project, 30 Elm St., Worcester MA 01609. For info, email [info@wwhp.org](mailto:info@wwhp.org) or call 508-767-1852.

## NOTICE

OF

**18th ANNUAL MEETING**

**Thursday, October 24, 2013**

**5:30 p.m.**

**Worcester Historical Museum**

*followed by a talk by*

**Karen Board Moran**

**on her new book**

***Gates Along My Path***

**Booksigning**

**Light Refreshments**

**All Welcome**

***See page 3 for details.***

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Take Note	2
18th Annual Meeting	3
WWHP	4
Abby Spoke Here	5
Preserving a Window...	6
Embassy Officials...	7
WOMEN IN PRINT 2014	8
WOMEN IN PRINT 2013	9
10th Annual History Tour	10
Thank you	11
<i>Gates Along My Path</i>	12

\* Go to [www.worcester.edu](http://www.worcester.edu) for CAMPUS MAP. Ticket order form is at end of newsletter.

## WORCESTER WOMEN'S HISTORY PROJECT

30 Elm Street • Worcester, MA 01609  
Telephone: 508-767-1852  
Website: wwhp.org • Email: info@wwhp.org

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Heather-Lyn Haley, President  
Dianne Bruce, Vice President  
Mary Plummer, Clerk  
Kathleen Comer, Treasurer

**Executive Assistant:** Nancy Avila  
wwhp.office@gmail.com

**Newsletter Committee:** Kara Wilson,  
Barbara J. Sinnott, Mary Plummer,  
Dianne Bruce, Nancy Avila

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](http://www.wwhp.org)



Thank you! to contributors to this newsletter Jeana Edmonds, Maureen Ryan Doyle, Karen Board Moran, Kara Wilson, Janet Davis, Lynne McKenney Lydick, Nancy Avila, Heather-Lyn Haley

**On Fri, Feb 15, 2013** Karen Moran wrote:

Another great newsletter celebrating past, present and future Worcester women! Bonnie Hurd Smith's article tied them all together for readers. As a retired teacher I so appreciated community donations that allowed our staff to offer guest speakers either during the day or after school hours. We were able to invite senior community groups during the day and the public after school. Keep spreading the message because you never know who will gain courage from our foremothers to make a difference in the world.



**On Sat, Feb 16, 2013** Karen Moran wrote:

I also just visited "Voices of Worcester Women" blog which for some reason I missed in previous newsletters? Nicely done by Martin and Doyle. WWHP on Facebook is also neat! How far we've come!  
Karen



Learning quilting with guidance from WWHP friends at the Peace Festival, Fuller Family Park August 15

### Volunteer Opportunities

To work on PR, updating of the trail guide, or to take on leadership opportunities, email [info@wwhp.org](mailto:info@wwhp.org) or call 508-767-1852.



"Like" us on facebook to keep up to date on women's history news. <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Worcester-Womens-History-Project-WWHP/111903762230357>



is set up on our website on the membership page <http://www.wwhp.org/support-wwhp> You may find it convenient for renewing your membership or giving a gift membership.

## 18th WWHP ANNUAL MEETING

Thursday, October 24, 2013

5:30 p.m.

Worcester Historical Museum

30 Elm Street, Worcester



Following the short meeting, Karen Board Moran will speak about her newly published book *Gates Along My Path*. The novel explores the need and impact of the first National Woman's Rights Convention through the lives of the children living in Worcester in 1850. (See Kara Wilson's review of her book on p12 of this newsletter.) Ms. Moran also co-authored the one-woman play "Yours For Humanity—Abby" which premiered in 2004 and which may be booked through WWHP. Ms. Moran, a former member of WWHP's steering committee, now lives in Arizona. There will be a booksigning. Also, this evening a Memorial Circle for WWHP charter member Angela Dorenkamp will be held.

*The public is invited.*

*Light Refreshments*

### OBITUARY OF ANGELA G. DORENKAMP

Worcester - Angela Gloria (Donati) Dorenkamp, 83, died suddenly on April 20, 2013 at the Jewish Health Care Center where she had resided after having a major stroke in September 2000 that left her partially paralyzed.

Angela Donati was born in St. Louis, MO, the only daughter of an Italian immigrant, Leo S. Donati, and his wife Rose (née Gualdoni). Her father, though he had not finished grade school, instilled in her early a belief in the importance of education and was determined that she should have the same opportunities as her two brothers. The lesson was well learned, as she earned her B.A., summa cum laude, from Webster College in Missouri, her M.A. from St. Louis University and, when she was 44 years old, her Ph.D. from the University of Connecticut, where she was elected to Phi Beta Kappa.

She began her teaching career in 1951 at Nerinx Hall High School in Missouri and ended it in 1995, when she retired from Assumption College, where she had been a professor of English, Writing, and Women's Studies. Many of her students developed lifelong friendships with her and others sought her out years later to thank her, including a group from Nerinx Hall who contacted her recently when celebrating their 50th reun-

Dr. Dorenkamp's degrees and teaching were only a small part of her achievements. She was a Radcliffe Institute Fellow from 1968-1974 and served on a number of academic committees and boards throughout her career. From 1977-1981, she was vice-president and president of the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities and Public Policy and, from 1984-1991, she served as an officer, including president, of the College English Association. She was a frequent presenter of papers at academic conferences and also co-edited a Women's Studies text, "Images of Women in American Popular Culture."

Dr. Dorenkamp was also an activist and prominent member of the Worcester community throughout her life. She moved to Worcester in the early 60's with her then husband, John H. Dorenkamp. With a group of like-minded Catholic friends and colleagues, they fought for civil and women's rights, and advocated for the poor and for peace, and became friends with Abbie Hoffman and his mother, Florence. As the mother of a special needs son, Dr. Dorenkamp was also a strong and personal advocate for him. She served as vice-president of Prospect House, on several committees for the Worcester Public Schools, and on both the City Manager's Advisory Committee on the Status of Women and the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women. She also served on the founding steering

*See continuation on page 10.*

## Telling Our Stories is What Saves Us

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

The Worcester Women's Oral History Project will present *Telling Our Stories is What Saves Us: Why Autobiographies, Oral Histories, and Family Stories Matter*, a talk by Dr. Lucia Knoles, on **Tuesday, December 3, at 5:30 p.m.** in the Saxe Room of the Worcester Public Library. Dr. Knoles is a professor of English at Assumption College.



Dr. Knoles commented on her upcoming presentation with these words: "I began thinking about why we need stories when my parents lost theirs. My mother's story was stolen from her by Alzheimer's; my father lost his story the day he moved with her to an assisted living residence. Instead of being recognized as a successful retired executive who lived in the beautiful white house with purple doors who played the ponies

at the racetrack on weekdays but played the violin for mass in church on Sunday, suddenly my dad felt that he was seen only as another old man who needed help putting on his stockings.

"As a college English teacher, it occurred to me that teaching an autobiography-writing class at my father's assisted living residence might enable him and his new neighbors to regain their self-respect and build a sense of community by sharing their stories with one another. Since then, I've helped others, including nursing home caregivers, families of people with Alzheimer's, and hospice patients write their life stories.

"In the process, I've started to notice how many people have turned to life-stories in times of crisis: former slaves and holocaust victims, homeless people and war veterans, doctors working with cancer patients and psychologists working with the dying. It's clear that putting your life story into words can help you relive joy, overcome trauma, forge an individual identity, build community, find a sense of meaning, and even shape the course of history. And new scientific studies are beginning to help us understand exactly how that works. Yet, many of us continue to neglect the stories of our own lives until it's too late. How many times have you heard someone say, "I wish I had asked my mother about that"?"

"And so, instead of "lecturing" in December, I hope to share a medley of stories about how our stories can save us. Some will be taken from my own experience; others will be borrowed from writers, historians, and scientists. I'll also suggest some methods you can use to collect and pass on your own family stories as well as some creative ways you can help others find their own voices. As writer Barry Lopez says: 'If stories come to you, care for them. And learn to give them away where they are needed. Sometimes a person needs a story more than food to stay alive.'"

Dr. Knoles' presentation on December 3 is free of charge and open to the public.

## WWOHP Partnered with New England Archivists At Spring Conference

By Maureen Ryan Doyle

The New England Archivists, a nonprofit regional organization for those who organize, preserve, and provide access to historical records, partnered with WWOHP, Worcester Historical Museum, Worcester Cultural Development Office, Lutheran Social Services of New England and StoryCorps for its Spring Conference and 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration at the College of the Holy Cross. Charlene L. Martin and Maureen Ryan Doyle, Co-Chairs of WWOHP, offered an Oral History Workshop as part of the conference. The purpose of the workshop was to teach beginners how to conduct oral history interviews. Attendees learned how to ask the right questions, use the correct equipment to record interviews, and set up environments conducive to obtaining interviewees' stories. The workshop also addressed needs specific to interviewing immigrants, including offering solutions to the challenge of language barriers and giving guidance for gaining community trust and acceptance.

NEA's guiding purpose for this three-day conference was to focus on an underserved community within Worcester and the project, *Why Worcester*, was formed with this in mind. With the assistance of the aforementioned groups, first-person recollections of Worcester's diverse immigrant community were gathered. Special emphasis was placed on those immigrants who have made Worcester their home during the last five years. *Why Worcester*, was developed in such a way as to invite two participants, such as siblings, neighbors, or friends, into a recording space to ask questions of each other. Those questions led the individuals on the paths of telling the stories of their journeys to Worcester. These oral histories from some of Worcester's newest residents are viewed as crucial pieces to documenting local history.

NEA is committed to informing historians, genealogists, students, journalists, and others about archival resources that may be of use to them. NEA also works with individuals in related professions, such as record managers, libraries, and town clerks to promote the sharing of information among the larger community of information professionals.

WWOHP's workshop at the conference was part of the organization's ongoing commitment to offer programming about oral history to the public.

## ABBY SPOKE HERE

By Karen Board Moran

*Well I remember the wonder with which,  
when a young girl, I looked upon  
Abby Kelly[sic], when she spoke of  
the wrongs of black women and black men.*

- Matilda Joslyn Gage, Fayetteville, NY (1826-1898)



Abby and her husband Stephen S. Foster visited Gerrit Smith in the fall of 1843 and according to 6 September 1860 *Oneida Sagem* spoke at his Free Church of Peterboro, NY. From Norman K. Dann's Collection.

*Life is short. Let us hasten to say what we believe  
men need to have said, even though  
we shall be hated for saying it.*

- Gerrit Smith (1797-1874) on 14 April 1861

The wisdom of **Gerrit Smith's** words at age 64 should resonate in each of us. Reformers throughout history have lived by these words—affecting not only those in their audience and those who read or heard their ideas from others—but those of us who “hear” them over a hundred of years later. Each new generation “hears” Abby’s words of equality through the continuing efforts of the Worcester Women’s History Project. Abby’s recognition in the National Abolition Hall of Fame and the National Women’s Hall of Fame (NWHF) continues to reach new audiences.

On a recent visit along New York’s Freethought Trail, we could visualize 19<sup>th</sup> century women and men of Worcester spreading ideas across the country and across the generations. It was easy to see history as a relay race with each generation inspired and driven toward a more just world where every human would be able to use their skills to carry the baton forward to the best of their ability.

Young housewife and mother **Matilda Joslyn Gage** said, *I saw the reports of the first convention [1850 first National Woman’s Rights Convention in Worcester, MA] in the New York Tribune, I knew my place; and when I read the notice of a convention to be held in Syracuse, in 1852, I at once decided to publicly join the ranks of those who spoke against wrong.*

**Lucy Stone** and **Samuel May** encouraged Gerrit Smith, **Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s** cousin, to attend the 3<sup>rd</sup> national

convention in Syracuse. This convention was known as the bloomer convention because Gerrit’s daughter **Elizabeth Smith Miller**, designer of the “bloomer” costume, and several other reformers wore the more comfortable mode of dress.

Temperance activist **Susan B. Anthony** said she had been inspired into action by reports of Lucy Stone at the 1850 convention and later worked closely with Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Gage in the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA). It is interesting to study how Lucy and Susan were at odds over suffrage for black men and how Matilda and Susan were at odds over reconciliation between the NWSA and Lucy’s American Woman Suffrage Association in 1890 to focus on the goal of gaining the vote for women to empower them to achieve equality. This historic lesson shows that reformers do not necessarily agree on the tactics and strategies to achieve their goal, but eventually realize the need to join forces to win the desired prize. Even Abby and Gerrit Smith disagreed on using politics to end slavery. They could still be friends, or at least distantly polite, and agree to disagree for the moment—a good message to send today’s Congress.

At the NWHF we “heard” Gray Panther founder Maggie Kuhn’s message (1905-1995) to *Leave safety behind. Put your body on the line. Stand before the people you fear and speak your mind—even if your voice shakes. When you least expect it, someone may actually listen to what you have to say. Well-aimed slingshots can topple giants. And do your homework.* The wisdom of experience is as important as the energy and new perspectives of the younger generation to move the ball forward. It took the combined efforts of the more traditional National American Woman Suffrage Association and young radical “Iron Jawed Angels” of the National Woman’s Party to achieve the vote for American women in 1920. ...And the longest American crusade continues against gender bias!

### Learn more:

**Dann**, Norman K. *Practical Dreamer: Gerrit Smith and the Crusade for Social Reform*. Hamilton, NY: Log Cabin Books, 2009.

**Iron Jawed Angels**. HBO Home Video, 2004. <http://iron-jawed-angels.com/>.  
**Maggie Kuhn**. National Women’s Hall of Fame, 1995. <http://www.greatwomen.org/women-of-the-hall/search-the-hall/details/2/95-Kuhn>.

**Sterling**, Dorothy. *Ahead of Her Time: Abby Kelley and the Politics of Anti-slavery*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1991.

**Wagner**, Sally Roesch. *She Who Holds Up the Sky: Matilda Joslyn Gage*. Aberdeen, SD: Sky Carrier Press, 2002.

### Worcester Women’s History Project

Website [www.wwhp.org](http://www.wwhp.org)

**Check out** the WWHP website which contains general information about the project, resources from the historical library and on curricula, and announcements on news and events. If you have information to add to the news and events page, please contact Janet Davis at [mjldavis@aol.com](mailto:mjldavis@aol.com).

## Preserving a Window on Your Past

By Karen Board Moran

This is a cautionary tale regarding the unique daguerreotype by Ezra Greenleaf Weld which captured the Cazenovia, NY Fugitive Slave Law Convention in Grace Wilson's apple or-



Photo courtesy American Antiquarian Society

chard on Sullivan Street on 22 August 1850. It is hard for us to imagine a huge gathering of abolitionists and fugitive slaves in a rural community where the audience would be held as spell-bound by speeches about a federal law protecting the institution of slavery as popular as a modern day band concert.

### Abby in Concord

Abby was welcomed at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Concord, Massachusetts, on August 28, 2013, as their celebratory event for Women's Equality Day. The event drew a promiscuous audience, (men and women together in the same room) of about 40. Throughout the performance you could hear a pin drop as Abby's eloquent words captivated them and drew them into the drama. At the end of the play, genuine and generous applause followed the performance. The questions and answer period was as usual a wonderful way to connect the past to the present and allowed for interesting and educational exchanges.

When asked by Lynne McKenney Lydick, actress performing as Abby Kelley Foster, if anyone had heard of Abby prior to this event, not a single hand was raised. Abby and her message has many miles to go till, at the very least, all Massachusetts residents know of their famous radical abolitionist and woman's rights activist!

"EVERYONE enjoyed the performance! You, and the women you portray, are always SUCH a great source of inspiration. Your energy and passion, as the Colonel said, are a gift!" said Denise Kammerer-Cody, Federal Women's Program Manager. "Thank YOU for bringing Abby to us." [These comments were directed to Lynne McKenney Lydick.]

As I tried to capture that excitement to breathe life into Abby Kelley Foster, I seized upon this picture found in Dorothy Sterling's definitive biography *Ahead of Her Time: Abby Kelley Foster* (1991). This image became my personal icon for Abby as Carolyn Howe and I tried to bring Abby to life in *Yours for Humanity—Abby* as portrayed for WWHP by Lynne McKenney Lydick. Abby's *carte de visite* on the right was too staid to capture the dynamic Abby who could sway people's minds with her words and actions.

Sadly, I did not search thoroughly enough for evidence that the woman at the table was actually Abby. Would she have worn such a bonnet? Hugh Humphrey's "*Agitate! Agitate! Agitate!*" *The Great Fugitive Slave Law Convention and its Rare Daguerreotype*. (Madison County Heritage #19, 1994) identifies the woman at the convention table as **Theodosia Gilbert**, fiancé of William L. Chaplin. The picture was taken to send to Chaplin who was to have been a keynote speaker, but was in jail for helping fugitive slaves escape. Abolitionists would not have wasted time posing for the long exposure without a good cause.

**The lesson for all of us who are trying to preserve our family or historic stories is to label and date one's photos while the memory is fresh in our minds or the minds of relatives.** While most of us will never "make it to the history books", every person influences the people around them by word and deed. We shape the next generation whether they are our biological offspring, our employees or the kid down the block. It is up to us to make the efforts to listen to others and to encourage the art of thinking for oneself to shape the kind of world where we want to live.

### *Yours for Humanity—Abby*

**Abby in National Abolition Hall of Fame and in National Women's Hall of Fame.** To commemorate the second anniversary of Abby's

Inductions into the two Halls of Fame:

A quote from Stacey Robertson, co-nominator of Abby for induction into the **National Abolition Hall of Fame** and author of *Hearts Beating for Liberty: Women Abolitionists in the Old Northwest* – published in 2010.

"Abby Kelley Foster single-handedly transformed the nature of the western antislavery movement in the 1840s," Stacey Robertson said. "From her first visit in the summer of 1845, she inspired hundreds of abolitionists to reconsider their approach to the movement and embrace a more uncompromising position. Women found her irresistible and she helped to organize dozens of female anti-slavery societies in Ohio, Indiana and Michigan. She also convinced several women to join her in the lecturing field, devoting themselves full-time to the movement. No other person impacted western antislavery more than Abby Kelley Foster."

From Abby's nomination into the **National Women's Hall of Fame**... "*Go where least wanted, for there you are most needed.*" *Abby Kelley Foster lived this motto, and in turn, led the demand for equality at a time when it was severely lacking.*

## **Embassy Officials, Hosted by the International Center of Worcester, Learn about Worcester Women and Their Importance to American History**

*By Regina M. Edmonds*

Who would have imagined that a simple email sent to me on April 23<sup>rd</sup> by Nancy Avila, WWHP's dedicated executive assistant, would have resulted in four days of frantic preparation culminating in an enjoyable presentation for a lively group of U.S. foreign embassy officials? Certainly not me!!!! But that is exactly what happened and here's how.

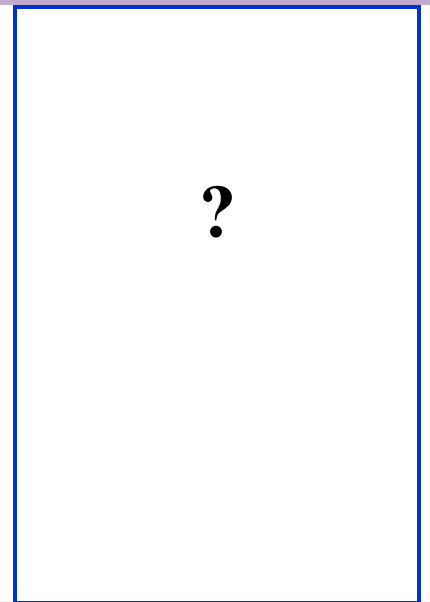
The email Nancy sent asked if I would be willing to give a brief presentation about the work of the Worcester Women's History Project to a group of international travelers on April 29<sup>th</sup> at Clark University and if so would I get in touch with Dr. Royce Anderson, the executive director of the International Center of Worcester which was the organization hosting this group. Despite the short time between the invitation and the event itself, preparing such a presentation sounded interesting, fun, and most importantly not too much work, so I wrote a quick email back saying — sure, no problem and the next day I contacted Dr. Anderson to let him know that I would be the person representing the WWHP. In talking with him I also hoped to get a better sense of the composition of this group of visitors and how talking about the Worcester Women's History Project would fit into their overall interests. **That is when the plot really thickened!!!!** It turned out that the group coming to Worcester consisted of twenty-five senior embassy officials from twenty-two different countries who were visiting the United States as part of a training program sponsored by the U.S. Department of State. This program had the goal of teaching the participants as much as possible about American culture, history, and government so that they could return to the embassies in their home countries to help interpret for their fellow citizens American policy decisions using their newly developed understanding of American society gained through this training program. To quote Dr. Anderson, "This is a unique 'Citizen Diplomacy' opportunity to interact with people on the forefront of our foreign policy in many parts of the world." He went on to say that he hoped I could demonstrate how Worcester women were directly connected to national women's rights movements and asked that I develop a set of PowerPoint slides to illustrate my talk, prepare handouts summarizing my main points, and perhaps develop a list of relevant readings for the group. He also provided me with a list of the participants, their home countries, and their fascinating bios. I was immediately in awe of this astonishing group of embassy officials but also completely panic-stricken!!!! **What had I gotten myself into now!!!!** I had been thinking of the presentation as being a casual one where some of the main accomplishments of the WWHP would be highlighted for a group of everyday travelers who were interested in local historical societies, but instead here I was with only four days to prepare a seemingly scholarly presentation on the place of Worcester and its women within the overall context of American history for a group of highly-educated, worldly individuals who probably had more knowledge and sophisticated analyses of the roots of American foreign policy than I could ever hope to achieve. Yikes!!!! All I could think of was — when will I ever

learn **NOT** to say yes to things before I even understand what they are? **Help!!!**

But luckily this story has a happy ending, due in large measure to the fact that help did indeed arrive. As is so often the case, women are there when we need them most and I was rescued from my anxiety and self-doubt by several wonderful women. Nancy Avila was super in providing me with lots of details on the impact of Worcester women from materials she uncovered in the WWHP archives while Dr. Anderson put me in touch with Chenbo Yan, a young woman who served as his program coordinator, and she helped in the preparation of what turned out to be a set of beautiful PowerPoint slides. My colleague and friend from Assumption College, Ellen White, also helped me by formatting a lovely handout featuring portraits and brief biographies of ten significant Worcester women from three periods in time.

I decided to focus my talk on the movement toward social justice because I saw this process as central to American identity and, as a way of capturing this important theme, **I titled my presentation *Worcester Women: Their Place in America's Movement toward Universal Equality***. I was able to use the remarkably beautiful portraits of Abby Kelley Foster, Lucy Stone, Clara Barton, and Dorothea Dix, commissioned by the WWHP and hanging in Mechanics Hall, to highlight the central place these four Worcester women had in the struggles for the rights of women, the enslaved, the physically injured, and the psychologically challenged. Worcester as the site of the first National Woman's Rights Convention was also discussed. Next I presented two short synopses of the lives of two other prominent Worcester figures, namely Frances Perkins, Secretary of Labor during the presidency of Franklin Roosevelt and the first woman to serve in a cabinet position, and Emma Goldman, the controversial activist and outspoken critic of capitalism and wars of imperialism. I also highlighted Worcester's important place in the history of reproductive rights by noting that the first successful oral contraceptive pill was developed at the Worcester Foundation for Experimental Biology at the urging of Margaret Sanger, the founder of what is now known as Planned Parenthood. I concluded the presentation by focusing on the continuing challenges to achieving universal equality in America and spoke briefly about three Worcester women of our current time period who embody the spirit of working for the rights of the oppressed and disadvantaged, namely Annette Rafferty, founder of Abby's House, Ginger Navickus, director for many years of the Daybreak Shelter for battered women, and our own hero, the late Angela Dorenkamp, a founding member of the WWHP. To end on a lighter note, I projected the infamous yellow smiley face, now an ever-present international "emoticon" which was developed in Worcester by ad man Harvey Ball to motivate his co-workers and which now cheers us on in numerous ways nearly every day and hopefully inspires us to stay optimistic about and engaged in the work for social justice that remains to be done. The audience was very responsive and generous in their comments about the talk and then they enjoyed two other excellent presentations focused on empowering women through mentorship initiatives which rounded out the morning of April 29, 2013 at Clark University. **What a great day it turned out to be!!!!** — Regina M. Edmonds

11<sup>th</sup> Annual  
**WOMEN IN PRINT 2014**



**Join us for an evening with  
three local authors!**



**CJ Posk** To spark the interest and curiosity of children, and to reflect her own love for Worcester, Posk has authored this children's book in the hopes that it will develop in them a lifelong appreciation of the city of Worcester.

**Susan Elizabeth Sweeney** authored this collection of poems which examines things that those we love have left behind. *Hand Me Down* was selected as a semifinalist in the 2012 New Women's Voices Poetry Chapbook Competition. Sweeney teaches American literature and creative writing at the College of the Holy Cross.

**The third author will be announced in  
future publicity.**

**Wed., March 19, 2014**

*(Snow date: March 26)*

**5:30-7:30 p.m.**

**Worcester Public Library  
Saxe Room  
3 Salem Square  
Worcester, MA 01608**

**Free & Open to the Public**



*WORCESTER WOMEN'S HISTORY PROJECT*  
*We remember our past ... to better shape our future*

[www.wwhp.org](http://www.wwhp.org)  
508-767-1852, [info@wwhp.org](mailto:info@wwhp.org)  
30 Elm St., Worcester, MA 01609



## WOMEN IN PRINT 2013

*A Review by Kara Wilson*

Despite the rain and wind on the evening of March 6, 2013, 45 people attended the tenth annual WOMEN IN PRINT, held in the Saxe Room at the Worcester Public Library. The evening began with an introduction by Dianne Bruce, WWHP Vice President. After reminding the audience that March is membership renewal month for WWHP and Women's History Month, Ms. Bruce introduced the first author, **Katherine Keenum**, who holds a Ph.D. in Medieval Studies from University of Texas.

Dr. Keenum began with a story about how her great-grandmother was expelled from Vassar for helping her friend elope in the 1870s. Dr. Keenum found out about this by finding an article, but she could not find any letters or diary entries on this topic. Finding the article made her wonder two basic things about her great-grandparents. The first was how did they meet? Dr. Keenum's great-grandfather was a Civil War veteran and twenty years older than her great-grandmother, who was a young, spunky artist. The second thing Dr. Keenum wondered was what was it like in the 1870s? These two questions spurred on Dr. Keenum to write the historical fiction novel, *Where the Light Falls*, as a serious exploration of the art world in Paris in the 1870s.

Dr. Keenum focused her novel on Jeannette Palmer, her great-grandmother. The novel opens with the expulsion from Vassar. In the novel, it was recommended by Jeannette's professor that she go to Paris to study art, but with the warnings "use common sense, don't make mistakes" and "when an artist gives up a career, somewhere an angel weeps." At this point, Jeannette, who is originally from Ohio, goes to New York City with a letter of reference from this professor from Vassar in the hopes of being trained by various art teachers, including Mary Cassatt's teacher. Later, Jeannette travels to Paris with her cousin, Effie. Dr. Keenum mentioned that Effie was an "invented spinster cousin", who plays the role of third main character in the novel beside the heroine Jeannette and Jeannette's love interest, Edward. While in Paris, Jeannette studies under a very prestigious artist at Academy Julian, in spite of the very expensive tuition. In her research, Dr. Keenum discovered that the tuition fees women paid were twice what men paid. She also mentioned using a book written by May Alcott (sister of Louisa May Alcott) to find out where to buy art supplies in Paris in the 1870s. This book "gave texture and immediacy to a novel." Dr. Keenum also looked at letters May Alcott sent to Louisa May Alcott from Paris, claiming "It's a way of living the experience and does have historical value."

The second author of the evening was **Edna P. Spencer**. In her introduction of Ms. Spencer, Dianne Bruce highlighted that she is the first black woman to serve as President of the YWCA of Worcester and the first black woman to serve as Chair of Trustees of Quinsigamond Community College, among other accolades. Ms. Spencer is a Worcester native and a graduate of Clark University. Ms. Spencer began her talk by mentioning how people no longer write letters, unlike in previous generations. "Slaves wrote letters, even though they weren't supposed to," she said. Ms. Spencer's great-grandfather was born during the time of slavery, but was free and owned land in Oakridge, Tennessee, where Ms. Spencer was born.



Katherine Keenum



Edna P. Spencer



Elizabeth Fideler

When the Tennessee Valley Association was established in the 1930s, this land was taken away, which caused Ms. Spencer's family to migrate north to Worcester. This migration is documented in Ms. Spencer's book *What Color Is the Wind*. Ms. Spencer read a section from the book about her family home in Oakridge, which was so descriptive that I felt as though I were there. It was a warm recollection of her home, but Ms. Spencer admitted farm life was hard. Her father died young and her mother went to Worcester, remarried, and then sent for Ms. Spencer to join her at the age of six. Sadly, Ms. Spencer's mother died when she was nine and she went to live with relatives in Upton who were not very welcoming. However, Ms. Spencer said her family made the Worcester community their home and contributed to the community through their work, serving in the military, and becoming involved in the neighborhood and the church. She closed her talk by reading the following passage from her book, "They chisled out places in the neighborhood: sent their sons to war, ran their businesses, and raised their children."

Dianne Bruce introduced the final author of the evening, **Elizabeth Fideler**. She mentioned that Ms. Fideler's book *Women Still At Work - Professionals Over Sixty And On the Job* stems from her research which focuses on men and women who choose to work beyond traditional retirement age. Ms. Fideler is a Framingham resident, chairs the Framingham Library's Board of Trustees, and is a research fellow at Sloan Center on Aging and Work at Boston College. Ms. Fideler mentioned how timely it was to be speaking on the topic of working women, since it was the fiftieth anniversary of Betty Friedan's *The Feminist Mystique*, Women's History Month, and the one-hundredth anniversary of women suffragettes' march on Washington, DC.

*See continuation on page 12.*

## 10th Annual Women's History Tour: Hartford 2013

Review by Janet Davis, WWHP Steering Committee member

On Saturday, June 21<sup>st</sup>, 29 members and friends of the Worcester Women's History Project embarked on the annual bus trip. This year the destination was Hartford, CT. After an hour-long journey, we arrived at our first destination, the **Harriet Beecher Stowe House and Mark Twain House** museums. Both of these former homes of two great American authors are adjacent to each other, in an area of Hartford known as **Nook Farm**. At the time that Harriet Beecher Stowe and Samuel Clemens lived in these homes, Nook Farm was a celebrated center of New England literary life. Harriet, along with her husband and two adult twin daughters, moved into her home when she was in her sixties in 1873, while Samuel was in his thirties when he and his wife moved into their home to raise their children in 1874. Harriet and Samuel were known to be friendly neighbors. Both house museums can be seen only through a guided tour. Given the size of our group, we were split into smaller groups, with all groups applauding the extensive knowledge of their respective tour guides.

**The Mark Twain House** is a combination of the Gothic Revival and Stick style of architecture popular in the late Victorian era. A majority of the home has been painstakingly restored to the time that Samuel and his family lived in it, thanks to surviving pieces and the meticulous records that were kept by his wife Olivia. The interior is noticeably dark, with the lower lighting that would have existed with gas light fixtures. Additionally, the beautiful woodwork throughout the home is in the darker tones. Beginning in the main receiving hall and continuing throughout the house, the decoration includes beautiful stencil work, from the design firm of Louis Comfort Tiffany (before he was famous for stained glass), and richly embossed wallpapers. The lifestyle of the Clemens family is evident in this home, from the floor to ceiling mirror used for ballet practice by his three daughters in the drawing room, to the third floor billiard room where Samuel entertained his guests and did his writing.

**The Harriet Beecher Stowe House** is also of the Gothic Revival style, but it is a cottage. It is noticeably lighter in both exterior color and interior light level. Harriet liked light, bright spaces and refrained from using heavy draperies, preferring lace curtains, or no curtains at all. The home contains the table at which Harriet did most of her writing, as well as memorabilia that resulted from the commercial success of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. There are also many works of art by Harriet herself, as she was a painter with both words and the brush. The subject of her art work is fruit and flowers. Also part of the Harriet Beecher Stowe house is the visitor center. This separate building provides more information about Harriet and the Beecher family. It also provides programming and events that use Harriet's life and work to inspire others to change the inequities in the world. Both homes are full of rich visual details that help to paint a picture of the lives of these two great American authors. It is definitely worth the visit.

After the house museums, we headed to the **Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art**, the oldest public art museum in the country. We enjoyed a fabulous lunch at the Museum Café, where we dined on the outside patio. We were then separated into groups where the fabulous docents took us on a special tour highlighting female artists and subject matter. From a portrait of a founding mother, Abigail Ellsworth of Connecticut, to the patronage of Elizabeth Colt, and to modern artists Kiki Smith and Lee Lozano, the museum had much to highlight on women and the arts. Much like the first stop of the day, there is a lot more to this museum than can be appreciated in a single visit.



The Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art:

<http://www.thewadsworth.org/>

The Harriet Beecher Stowe House:

[http://www.harrietbeecherstowecenter.org/visit/hbs\\_house.shtml](http://www.harrietbeecherstowecenter.org/visit/hbs_house.shtml)

The Mark Twain House:

<http://www.marktwainhouse.org/>

OBITUARY *continued from p3.*

committee of the Worcester Women's History Project. In 1984 she was named a Worcester Woman of Achievement and in 1995 she was a recipient of both an Honorary Degree from Assumption and of the Katharine F. Erskine award from the YWCA.

After her retirement, Dr. Dorenkamp remained engaged in academic life. She was one of the main organizers of an academic conference devoted to Elizabeth Bishop, and she co-edited a book from that conference, "In Worcester, Massachusetts": Essays on Elizabeth Bishop From the 1997 Elizabeth Bishop Conference at WPI. She was also instrumental in securing the headstone for Bishop's previously unmarked grave in Hope Cemetery.

A stroke in 2000 left Dr. Dorenkamp without the ability to walk and speak but, to the astonishment of everyone, she maintained her good spirits throughout her remaining years and continued to find much joy in life, remaining engaged in the lives of her family and friends and passionately concerned with the news and events of the city, nation, and global community. At the Jewish Healthcare Center she was surrounded by an extraordinarily loving and attentive staff, many of whom became her friends. Visits from her children, and from her grandchildren, thrilled her.

For all of her academic and community achievements, Dr. Dorenkamp was most proud of her children and the large, loving group of close friends she made throughout her life. She leaves her four children, Erica A. Dorenkamp and her partner Gretchen Neeley and their children, Harriet and Maud of Watertown, John H. Dorenkamp of Worcester, Thomas M. Dorenkamp and his partner Kathleen Haggarty of Worcester, and Monica Dorenkamp of New York. She also leaves her dear friends, including Annette Rafferty, Lucy Candib, Ginny Ryan, Margarita Reyes, Jeanne Rosenblatt, Barbara Kohin, Edna Sexton and too many more to name. She was predeceased by her two loving brothers, Leo S. and Robert M. Donati of St. Louis.

*Published in the WORCESTER TELEGRAM.*

A Memorial Mass for Dr. Dorenkamp was held on Saturday, May 18<sup>th</sup>, at 11:00 AM at The Chapel of the Holy Spirit, Assumption College. Donations may be sent to Abby's House, 52 High Street, Worcester, MA 01609, or to the Dr. Angela G. Dorenkamp Scholarship Fund, Assumption College, 500 Salisbury Street, Worcester, MA 01609.

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Mary E. Johnson  
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*In Memory of The Sheehan Sisters*  
Jeanne D. Rosenblatt  
Edna Sexton  
Ann Marie Shea  
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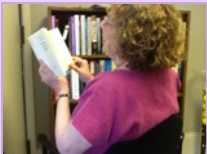
The Worcester Women’s History Project was founded in 1994 by a small group of women who wanted to raise awareness of the importance of the first National Woman’s Rights Convention, held in Worcester in 1850, and to highlight the City’s role – as a center of radical abolitionist activity and social reform – in the women’s rights movement. It was incorporated in 1995 as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

**WOMEN IN PRINT 2013** *continuation from p9*

Ms. Fideler became interested in her topic when she reached age 65, when the grant that paid her salary ran out, and she still wanted to keep working. She was interested in researching women still in the workforce after age 60. Through the Bureau of Labor Statistics, she found that the fastest growing segment of the workforce is women age 65 and older. This number is expected to grow by 90% over the next five years. These trends are happening because people are living longer, baby boomers and women in all age groups comprise all areas of the labor force for the first time, and jobs where women predominate have been more secure since the economic downturn than predominately male professions. Ms. Fideler surveyed 155 women ages 65-84 and interviewed 34 of these women in-depth. This information resulted in her book. Some of the top reasons for women to keep working are to keep connections, do something purposeful and meaningful, and for mental stimulation. Some other reasons were because some women are financially helping out children and grandchildren and because they still have a mortgage.

Many of the women Ms. Fideler surveyed are on their second or third careers, now that there are more career choices for women. They have defied stereotypes about aging, including showing they are competent with technology. Ms. Fideler read from her book, "Women give shortshrif to retirement because they enjoy their jobs." This is the main reason why older women keep working, according to the group Ms. Fideler surveyed. The average age of the surveyed group is 66 and they represent 25 countries. Nearly all of these women have at least bachelor's degrees and two-thirds have advanced degrees. Ms. Fideler concluded with two points. The first point is that the women she interviewed are *choosing* to work beyond retirement years as opposed to *needing* to, although many baby boomers are finding they don't have enough to retire comfortably. The second point is that older women need to be recognized. According to Ms. Fideler, "Older career women barely exist in the media."

At the end of Elizabeth Fideler's talk, WWHP President Heather-Lyn Haley thanked the three authors and gave each of them gifts of Liberty Farm notecards, WWHP Heritage Trail Guides, and one year free membership to WWHP. Doreen Velnich concluded the evening by informing the audience of some upcoming library events and inviting everyone to enjoy refreshments provided by the WWHP Events Committee. The Co-Chairs of the Events Committee are CJ Posk and Hanna Solska and other members are Fran Langille, Holly Nylander, Jeanne Rosenblatt, Kathleen Comer, Cherylann Holman, and Judy Finkel. Many thanks to the Events Committee and Dianne Bruce for organizing another successful WOMEN IN PRINT



Mary Plummer is continuing to help catalog book donations for the future WWHP lending library. Also helping are Louise Gleason and Nancy Avila. We need a bookcase.

***Gates Along My Path***

by Karen Board Moran

*A review by Kara Wilson*

Karen Board Moran has been a vital influence behind the Worcester Women's History Project since its beginning stages, nearly twenty years ago. Perhaps her most well-known contribution to WWHP is the play *Yours for Humanity—Abby*, which she co-authored with Carolyn Howe. Ms. Moran's passion for WWHP has not faded since her move to Tucson, Arizona, and we now are treated to another sample of her writing about nineteenth century Worcester in the form of her new historical fiction novel, ***Gates Along My Path***.

The setting of ***Gates Along My Path*** is Worcester between the years of 1849 and 1853. This was a period of reform in the city, as the first National Woman's Rights Convention happened in Worcester in October, 1850. While many of us are familiar with the convention and the events leading up to it, Karen Board Moran's book tells this story from the unique point of view of children living in the Orphans' Home run by the Worcester Children's Friend Society. Ms. Moran explains in her Author's Note at the beginning of the book why she chose to tell the story this way: "By using many primary and secondary sources, I hope this book will help the reader revive a sense of how the children growing up in the dynamic Worcester community of 1850 are not so different from the children of our time."

I believe Ms. Moran achieved her goal of showing the similarities and also the differences of children in Worcester in the 1850s as opposed to today. I also believe she was able to get across different speech and language patterns of the time period and how the struggles and daily lives of the children compare to modern times. I appreciated the depth of research Karen Board Moran did in order to write this book and that she included detailed footnotes and a bibliography to cite her sources of information. The footnotes were also helpful in distinguishing fact from fiction throughout the story. The two maps at the end of the book help the reader better visualize the setting of the story and the glossary is useful in explaining the different words and pronunciations used in the nineteenth century. I was pleased to see that all of the children narrating the story and other characters they mentioned and encountered were all actual people living in nineteenth century Worcester. Despite the fact that many of the characters left behind few, if any, examples of personal writings, Ms. Moran did an excellent job of giving them a voice and bringing this pivotal time in Worcester history to life through their words. On the back cover, ***Gates Along My Path*** is described as "historical fiction from a young adult point of view." Although this is a work of fiction, it does include a great deal of factual information and would be an ideal book for United States History teachers to use in their curriculum to educate students about women's history, nineteenth century history, New England history, and issues facing immigrants, orphans, and families in the past. Karen Board Moran's background as a teacher, her passion for Worcester history, and her love of research and writing have culminated in a highly valuable resource. To learn more about Karen Board Moran's work or to order a copy of ***Gates Along My Path***, please visit <http://windowonyourpast.com/site/>

**Note** that Karen Board Moran will give a talk and booksigning on ***Gates Along My Path*** on Thurs., October 24, 2013, 5:30pm, at the Worcester Historical Museum following the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Worcester Women's History Project.

# Inductions 2013

## NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME

76 Fall Street, Seneca Falls, NY 13148

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**24<sup>th</sup> Induction Ceremony  
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[www.greatwomen.org](http://www.greatwomen.org)

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**2013 Induction Weekend**

**Sat., October 19, and Sun., October 20, 2013**

[www.nationalabolitionhalloffameandmuseum.org](http://www.nationalabolitionhalloffameandmuseum.org)

**Note:** Abby Kelley Foster of Worcester was inducted into both Halls of Fame in 2011.

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