



# WORCESTER WOMEN'S HISTORY PROJECT

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



WWHP VOLUME 13, NO. 1

SPRING 2013

## SUPPORT WWHP WITH YOUR MEMBERSHIP IN MARCH

### Why Support Women's History? *by Bonnie Hurd Smith*

I am often asked about women's history, Well, that's interesting, but who cares? Beyond the entertainment value in telling stories, Why does women's history matter? What does it mean? What can it do for me? Why should I support it? Here are some answers to those questions, offered during National Women's History Month (March), because women's history not only matters it carries with it a contemporary urgency.

First, with rare exceptions, women's history is simply not being taught below the self-selected college level. Especially in public schools, where testing and corporate operating models have gained so much ground in recent years, women's history is considered superfluous. Girls and young women are not learning about the centuries-old, hard-won journey that brought us to where we are in 2012, nor do they know who provided leadership. One result of this omitted information is the loss of a collective female identity. Another is the loss of a powerful and endless source of pride, not to mention hundreds of role models who are inspiring examples of what can be achieved.

Too many of today's girls and young women still struggle with low self esteem, the deeply rooted believe that they "can't," or that certain obstacles are insurmountable. Too many struggle with money problems, the inability to stand up to a boss or romantic partner, or to take better care of their physical and mental health. We women are still taught to put everyone else first, and then we beat ourselves up when things don't go well for us. These behaviors have been centuries in the making, and studying women's history shows women and girls that it is not their fault – yes, they are responsible for their lives, but the context in which they find themselves now is not their fault.

There is comfort in having this knowledge, and in having role models to study, emulate, and help us find a way to succeed. Girls and young women must be able to imagine a healthy, happy, productive future for themselves that does not depend on their attachment to a man. What's more, finding ways to have girls and young women do their own research to uncover and tell the stories is incredibly empowering. Not only will their original work add to our collective body of knowledge, but they will likely adopt their subject as a friend and mentor, albeit historical, who will always be on their side.

Those of us women involved in women's history are filled with gratitude for the ballots we cast, the education we have access to, the jobs we hold, the businesses we start, and the kinds of relationships we deserve. Truly, there is joy in "doing" women's history.

### Sustainability

Individuals, businesses, and organizations that support women's history send a strong message to women and girls: You matter, and we care about you. We simply cannot leave women's history to the schools because they are not and cannot do the job. This is not the fault of teachers, but of the "teaching to the test" requirements that are thrust upon them. Instead, we need a community-wide response from the private and public sectors to sustain women's history.

From a strictly public relations and marketing standpoint, telling women and girls "We care about you" is an appealing message. Supporting women's history boosts a business's reputation, and allows its customers to view the business in a new way.

A business (for profit or nonprofit) or individual could sponsor a school project or guest speaker; find tour guides, researchers, or authors and back them; contact the cultural organizations in their community and ask how they could support an exhibit, lecture series, or special event; host an event at their place of business or local historical society, where guests enjoy a program and special discounts for women in honor of National Women's History Month.

These are the kinds of creative (well-publicized) initiatives that will demonstrate leadership on women's history in the communities a business serves or where an individual resides. Women customers, members, donors, colleagues, employees, and neighbors do pay attention -- for themselves and the girls and young women in their lives. Those girls and young women could be profoundly impacted in ways you may never know about, but take action anyway. Women's history matters, and your good works will come back to you.

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Bonnie Hurd Smith, the President and CEO of History Smiths, is an expert on using history in new and innovative ways. She is a marketing, PR, event planning, and cultural tourism professional who also happens to be a respected historian (especially women's history), author, and public speaker.  
<https://historysmiths.com/>

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**WORCESTER WOMEN'S HISTORY PROJECT**

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 Barbara J. Sinnott, Mary Plummer,  
 Dianne Bruce, Nancy Avila

WWHP is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable and educational organization incorporated in 1995

- 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**

**And so forth...**


☀ *Congratulations- this is such a wonderful project and gift to the community. Is it on Facebook? If so we can share. Well done and many thanks.* - Erin I. Williams, Cultural Development Officer (This was in response to the December 11, 2012, "Worcester Magazine" article on the Worcester Women's Oral History Project.)

☀ *I think it's really important for women to get credit for their intellectual work, even when it is done on behalf of an organization. Everyone wins.* - Ellen S. More, Ph.D. (This was in response to "Why Worcester?" which is on www.wwhp.org and also in the *Worcester Women's History Trail Guide*. No acknowledgement of the author had been given, but with a little detective work it was found that former Project Coordinator Jessie M. Rodrique, Ph.D. had written it and she is now acknowledged on the website.)

☀ *What a truly impressive response to an effort made not only to be historically accurate, but emotionally and socially accurate, and recognized as such. Congratulations!* - Polly Traina (This was in response to letter from the National Abolition Hall of Fame emailed to WWHP members. See letter on page 6 herein.)

☀ After the December 13th Steering Committee meeting hosted by WWHP President Heather-Lyn Haley, gingerbread house making was enjoyed. This is one by Jeana Edmonds.



☀  The fund goal has been met to replace the costume Lynne McKenney Lydick wore as Abby Kelley Foster in the play *Yours for Humanity—Abby*. She had worn it for many, many performances since its premiere in January 2004. The cost was \$600 for the beautifully-made new costume by Chris Weinrobe, which Lynne wore for the first time at the October annual meeting. Thank you to all who donated.

☀ PayPal 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.

☀ **facebook** Now you can "like" us on Facebook along with 62 others! Get updates about upcoming events and women's history news. <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Worcester-Womens-History-Project-WWHP/111903762230357>

☀ Heather-Lyn Haley organized a well-received quilling demonstration for a Kwanzaa celebration held on December 28 at the YWCA. Janet Davis and her daughter assisted.

☀ Thank you! to guest contributor to this newsletter, Bonnie Hurd Smith, and WWHP contributors Jeana Edmonds, Doreen Velnich, Maureen Ryan Doyle, Charlene Martin, Karen Board Moran, Kara Wilson, Marjorie Cohen, Linda Miller, Judy Fask, Dianne Bruce, Lynne McKenney Lydick, Nancy Avila, Heather-Lyn Haley

**Lynne McKenney Lydick will be performing *Yours for Humanity—Abby* at the North Attleborough Public Library on Thursday, February 28, at 7pm.**

## “THE OREAD INSTITUTE”

presented by

JAN PARENT AND PRESERVATION WORCESTER

Saturday, October 13, 2012, following

WWHP 17th ANNUAL MEETING



Jan Parent presented an interesting program on the Oread Institute with photos shown on PowerPoint. She is a new docent for Preservation Worcester. To being with, she said that in 1845 Eli Thayer bought four acres on Goat Hill for \$150 an acre and later bought ten acres down to Main Street. Believing that women should have the same opportunities as men, Thayer built what he named the “Oread Collegiate Institute.” At the time, Oberlin College in Ohio was the only college admitting women. He built the school like a castle. Stone was quarried off his land. In 1848, the 4-story North Tower was built, having a diameter of 50 feet. On May 14, 1848, the Oread Collegiate Institute opened in the North Tower with fourteen students. Two years later the South Tower was built. Eli Thayer named the college after Virgil’s poem *The Oread*.

In 1852, there were fourteen teachers and 150 students. Room and board was \$112. It cost \$12.50 more for a Tower room. Tuition for day students was \$25/year. For the first ten years, there were only twelve graduates – because it was a private college and girls who attended were from wealthy homes and mainly were interested in finding husbands and may not finish school.

A student’s day started at 6:30 a.m. with breakfast. She would bring down her oil lamp at that time to refill it with oil. Then she would return to her room to tidy it up. If water were needed, she would have to walk half way down the hill to get it. Each day was scheduled with one hour of physical activity, which might be a walk. There were no classes on Friday afternoons; and if a student wanted to go into town, she needed a chaperone. Friday evening was game night, with games like Charades. The favorite thing on Saturdays was to go to the Ledge. There was a boys’ school across the street (which later became named “Worcester Academy”). Eli Thayer graduated from Worcester Academy. He later became headmaster 1847-1848.

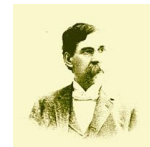
Two teachers from the Oread Institute [co-principal Sophia Packard and ornamental music teacher Harriet Giles] went on to found Spelman Seminary (named after Oread graduate Laura Spelman who married John D. Rockefeller), which later became Spelman College. Mr. Rockefeller made the donation to make the Spelman Seminary possible.



MR. THAYER IN MIDDLE LIFE.

**Eli Thayer** was born in 1819 in Mendon, Massachusetts, graduated from Brown University, later became a School Board member and a Selectman. In 1854, he introduced the Emigrant Aid Society. He was looking for free-thinking people whom he hoped would vote against slavery. Thayer was elected to Congress, after a run of only eight days. He was an inventor (invented the hydraulic elevator). He had many interests. After thirty-four years, in 1882, the Oread Institute closed. Thayer died in 1899 and his wife in 1908. Both are buried in Hope Cemetery, Worcester.

In 1898, Henry Perky bought the Oread real estate for \$75,000. He put \$81,000 into refurbishing mainly the inside of the building with water, electricity and elaborate furnishings.



Henry Perky

The kitchen was in the south parlor and was 50 feet in diameter and four floors high. There were 24 stations with stoves for cooking [a photo was shown). From 1898-1904 the building was the *Worcester Domestic Science Cooking School*. Henry Perky was the inventor of shredded wheat. The building was finally closed and razed in 1934.

Jan Parent showed a photo of a playground within what is believed to be the foundation of the North Tower [in Castle Park]. The Main South Community Development Corporation is raising funds for Castle Park. Casey Starr is a “tireless champion” working for MSCDC. Barbara Haller, Worcester City Council Member, lives in the neighborhood.

\*\*\*

President Heather-Lyn Haley thanked Jan Parent for the presentation and thanked everyone for coming and supporting the Worcester Women’s History Project.

Recorded by Nancy Avila

**WWHP 17th Annual Meeting held 10.13.12**

New members elected to the Steering Committee were Janet Davis and Fran Langille. See the full roster on page 2 herein. If you would like to receive the minutes, please email Nancy at [wwhp.office@gmail.com](mailto:wwhp.office@gmail.com) or call and leave a message at 508 767 1852.

## Voices from Vietnam held Tuesday, December 11, 2012

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



Dr. Karen Turner, professor of History at the College of the Holy Cross, and Dr. Kristin Waters professor of Philosophy at Worcester State University, are pictured at a WWOHP December event at the Worcester Public Library. Dr. Turner's documentary film, *Hidden Warriors: Women on the Ho Chi Minh Trail*, was presented to a standing-room-only audience. The film focuses on the vast number of North Vietnamese women who went to war and documents their daily lives and struggles. The documentary is based on Dr. Turner's book, *Even the Women Must Fight: Memories of War from North Vietnam*.

### Volunteers needed

Barbara Dixon, Special Events Coordinator from the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley, National Heritage Corridor in Woonsocket, RI, is working with several historical sites to create a guided tour for Rhode Island residents on Saturday, May 12.

Included will be **Liberty Farm** in Worcester, home of the family of Abby Kelley Foster in the mid 1800's. WWHP would like to assist by helping with yard work beforehand and giving guided tours in reenactor costumes on the day.

WWHPer Jeana Edmonds is coordinating the volunteer effort. Please offer your help by contacting her at [reginaedmonds@gmail.com](mailto:reginaedmonds@gmail.com).

## WWOHP to Partner with New England Archivists

By Maureen Ryan Doyle

The Worcester Women's Oral History Project (WWOHP) has entered into a partnership with the New England Archivists (NEA), the Worcester Historical Museum, and the Worcester Cultural Development Office in an effort to collect the oral histories of members of Worcester's immigrant community. WWOHP will hold an oral history workshop on March 23 on the campus of the College of the Holy Cross during the New England Archivists' Spring Conference.

The workshop, which is free and open to the public, will offer those in attendance the basic skills needed to record, collect, and share oral histories. Topics that will be covered include the value of oral history, the importance of listening, how to set up an interview, what equipment to use, and transcription tips. Attendees will be prepared to begin collecting oral histories immediately.

This workshop is part of a larger effort by the NEA entitled, *Why Worcester*, which will involve StoryCorps, the organization that has conducted and preserved over 40,000 interviews since 2003. Millions of listeners are familiar with the weekly broadcasts of StoryCorps on National Public Radio's *Morning Edition*. Facilitators from StoryCorps will come to Worcester to conduct recording sessions. In these sessions two individuals who know each other well will be interviewed. These people could be family members, neighbors, colleagues, etc. Using their mobile recording booths, the StoryCorps staff will be available for three days to record eight to ten interviews with 16 to 20 participants. Following the interview, each interviewee will receive a copy of his/her recording. At the conclusion of this process, the interviews and photographs of participants will be deposited at the Worcester Historical Museum, the NEA's archives at the University of Connecticut, and the StoryCorps archives.

WWOHP is honored to be part of this effort to capture the stories of individuals whose voices previously may have been absent from the historical record. *Why Worcester?* is seeking to reach two audiences, Worcester's diverse immigrant population and the general public. There are many questions to be considered as these stories unfold. Among them are: what immigrant groups are moving to Worcester and why; what makes Worcester hospitable to immigrants; how does society move in a direction to give voice to the voiceless; and what are the different ways in which local history is collected?

Anyone with an interest in oral history is encouraged to attend the free workshop. We especially welcome immigrants, genealogists, local historians, students, archivists, academics, as well as those individuals who are interested in preserving stories within their families. To register, please visit the NEA website, [www.newenglandarchivists.org](http://www.newenglandarchivists.org) where you will find a link to the conference.

## ***Finding Worcester Women's Stories of the Past***

*By Karen Board Moran*

Close to the founding of WWHP as members tried to uncover the stories of the members of the 1850 first National Woman's Rights Convention, we encountered a strong kinship network of Quakers and reformers. One well known antislavery family line evolved from William Buffum (1784-1869) and Lydia Arnold (1749-1828) of Rhode Island. Two of their children Arnold and Patience produced children who attended the convention as members. Elizabeth Buffum Chace of Valley Falls, RI signed the call to the 1850 Convention and signed in as #50 while her cousin Lydia Earle Chase of Worcester signed in as #220.

How did these woman's rights activists end up with such similar names? Elizabeth had married Samuel Chace while Lydia had married Anthony Chase.

Following WOMEN 2000, WWHP's Project Coordinator Jessie Rodrique transcribed Lucy Chase's diary found in the Chase Family Papers in the American Antiquarian Society Manuscript Collections. This was part of WWHP's efforts to follow the effects of the 1850 first National Woman's Rights Convention to discover the women of the Worcester area who continued the reform movement. The manuscript biography for Lydia's daughter Lucy Chase (1822-1909) in the Chase Family Papers (c. 1787-c. 1915) provides a window on this woman. "...[A]n intelligent and well-educated woman, as well as an accomplished artist and sculptor. [Lucy] attended the Friends' Boarding School in Providence, R.I., from 1837 to 1841. For the period 1863 to 1869, Lucy taught in contraband camps and freedmen schools in the South. She and her sister, Sarah, traveled in Europe during the years 1870 to 1875. They returned to Worcester and Lucy remained there until her death in 1909....

Much of the correspondence to Lucy Chase is from her siblings, cousins, and school friends. There are also school compositions, notebooks, and fragmented diary excerpts kept by Lucy [—transcribed by Rodrique]. The activities of Lucy as seen through her diary fragments span the years 1841 to 1846 and encompass several geographic locations including Massachusetts, Maryland, Virginia, Rhode Island, and Pennsylvania. The diary fragments read in their entirety give an excellent overview of antebellum America. Lucy's gregariousness along with her social awareness and critical sense provide both description and understanding of the religious and reform movements of the day. Reared as a Quaker and strongly influenced by Unitarianism, Lucy demonstrates the liberal and rationalist doctrines of the faiths by her eclectic church attendance and discerning remarks. Her involvement in Unitarianism brought her into contact with a network of notable Unitarian ministers primarily from Boston and Philadelphia. She either met personally or attended the lectures of George Washington Burnap (1802-1859), James Freeman Clarke (1810-1888), Ezra Stiles Gannett (1801-1871), and Samuel Joseph May (1797-1871).

The relentless thrust for improvement and reform, so characteristic of Jacksonian America, is especially evident in Lucy's diary entries. She is influenced strongly by women's suffrage, temperance, abolitionism, and is interested in Millerism, mesmerism, Grahamism, and phrenology. These interests brought her into contact with another network of luminaries. Among them were the abolitionist/reformer Wendell Phillips (1811-1884), Charles C. Burleigh (1810-1878), Alvan Stewart (1790-1849), Joshua Leavitt (1794-1873), John Anderson Collins (1810-1879), John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892), La Roy Sunderland (1802-1885), John Gorham Palfrey (1796-1881), William Wells Brown (1815-1884), women's rights advocates Abby Kelley Foster (1811-1887), Lucretia Mott (1793-1880), educator Horace Mann (1796-1859), humorist/journalist Joseph C. Neal (1807-1847), and phrenologist Orson Squire Fowler (1809-1887).

The influence of women's suffrage facilitated Lucy's sensitivity toward the precarious position of women in nineteenth-century America. She comments disapprovingly upon women's unequal status, whether it be within a religious context or the separation of men and women at abolition and temperance meetings. On the lighter side, Fowler the phrenologist told her that she must not study because her brain was already too large. Distressed, Lucy writes, "I shall be obliged to lay aside my course of study and try to be a character that has always been unpleasant to me to contemplate, a very common character." With perception, however, she also writes, "I took Lucy Hind's place in the kitchen today—I presume Fowler would say that is the place for me."

Lucy's intermittent visits to Philadelphia, c. 1842-1845, provide glimpses into a city experiencing an almost schizophrenic transformation. Underscoring a general Jacksonian thrust for improvement and social reform, Philadelphia also witnessed its bloodiest ethnic riots of the century. The Kensington Riots of May 1844 were Nativist attacks on Irish Catholic immigrants that resulted in dozens of burnt homes and two burnt churches. She writes of soldiers in the city protecting the Catholic churches and the dispersal of all meetings by the powers of authority. This marked the first time in Philadelphia's history that martial law was instituted. Included in Lucy's diary are comments on the beneficial aspects of the Eastern State Penitentiary (which she calls "one of the wonders of America"), the Deaf and Dumb Asylum, and the city's numerous almshouses. On a more, personal level, the diary provides a wealth of information detailing Lucy's emotional and intellectual growth. As her understanding of the world around her increases, she comments extensively and keenly upon slavery, inequality in general, the factory system, and the laboring classes. Her inspirations coincide with her growing interests as she comments, "Oh! how I wish I could go to college!" However, she experiences frustration upon realization that college is inaccessible to her after an evening of social discourse with her brother Pliny's friends, Edward Everett Hale (1822-1909) and William F. Channing (1820-1901).

*See Page 8 for continuation.*

Note the dates of this letter and  
the next letter from NAHOF.



**National Abolition Hall of Fame & Museum**

5255 Pleasant Valley Road, Peterboro, NY 13134-0055  
www.abolition.org · 315-366-8101

October 24, 2011

Worcester Women's History Project  
30 Elm Street  
Worcester MA 01609  
508-767-1852  
[www.wwhp.org](http://www.wwhp.org)

Dear "Abby Kelleyites,"

There will have to be a banner one day for the Worcester Women's History Project for its legacy in stewardship of the Abby Kelley Foster legacy! What exuberant, committed, gracious, and generous fans does Abby have to this day. She could certainly have benefited from such stalwart loyalty during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century! I admire your work and your legacies!

Thank you for being the first partners with NAHOF in the nomination of a 19<sup>th</sup> Century abolitionist to the National Abolition Hall of Fame and Museum. NAHOF and I greatly appreciated your patience and understanding as we worked through the preparations for Foster's induction. Thank you, also, for your commitment of time, travels, and attendance at the induction of Abby Kelley Foster to the National Abolition Hall of Fame and Museum on Saturday, October 22, 2011 at Colgate University. I cannot imagine what the evening would have been like without *Yours for Humanity - Abby* and the moving and meaningful nominations. The induction would certainly have been hollow without the WWHP in attendance!

NAHOF's determination to take time to commemorate each inductee is especially and personally gratifying to me in the case of the WWHP, because I look forward to continued collaboration - especially the commemoration of Foster Saturday, October 20, 2012.

I am also looking forward to a trip to Worcester to connect in that direction, as well. Thank you all so very much for your support and participation.

Sincerely,

Dorothy H. Willsey, President



National Abolition Hall of Fame and Museum  
5255 Pleasant Valley road  
Peterboro, NY 13035  
[www.nationalabolitionhalloffameandmuseum.org](http://www.nationalabolitionhalloffameandmuseum.org)

The Abby Kelley Foster banner



October 22, 2012  
177<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Inaugural Meeting of the New York State Anti-Slavery Society in Peterboro NY

Lynne McKenney Lydick  
42 North Parkway  
Worcester MA 01605  
508-856-9091  
[Lynne.ml@verison.net](mailto:Lynne.ml@verison.net)

Dear Lynne,

The National Abolition Hall of Fame and Museum (NAHOF) appreciates your participation in the commemoration of Abby Kelley Foster's induction to the Hall of Fame October 19 - 21, 2012.

Your portrayal of Foster for the first segment of the panel on *Abby Kelley Foster: The Person* on Friday, October 19 at the Center for Women's Studies at Colgate University was a welcomed addition. Your gripping and tender portrayal of Foster for the evening commemoration ceremonies moved those of us who had seen *Yours for Humanity – Abby* in 2011, as well as those persons who saw the one woman play for the first time this year. I believe it inaccurate to call your performance a "portrayal," as it seems that you almost channel Abby you are so in tune with her thoughts and feelings.

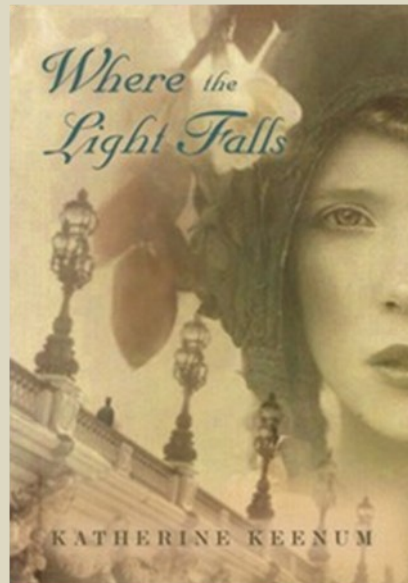
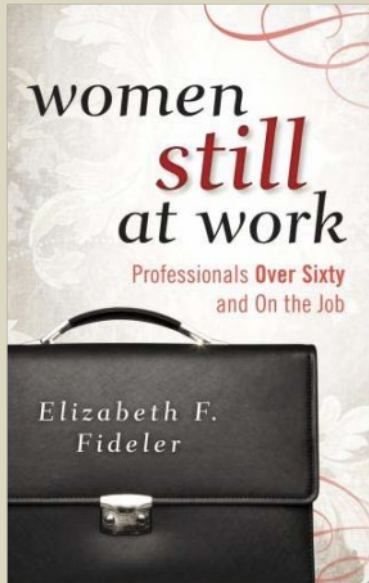
How fortunate for NAHOF that the first partnership for an inductee nomination was with the Worcester Women's History Project! The support and enthusiasm of the members with whom we have worked is inspiring. Thank you!

Thank you for supporting the Hall of Fame banner for Abby. It is so fitting that your name is there!

As I have said, I trust that this is not the closure of collaboration, but the beginning of a long lasting partnership to educate the public about 19<sup>th</sup> C. Abolition – and the need for the Second Abolition. I look forward to many more discussions on future programs.

Sincerely,  
Dot  
Dorothy Willsey, President Cabinet of Freedom

# 10<sup>th</sup> Annual WWHP **WOMEN IN PRINT**



**Wed., March 6, 2013**

(Snow date: March 13)

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

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

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

• • •  
**Elizabeth Fideler** authored *Women Still at Work—Professionals Over Sixty and On the Job*. She is a research fellow at the Sloan Center on Aging and Work at Boston College.

**Katherine Keenum** authored *Where the Light Falls*. She holds a Ph.D. in Medieval Studies from U of Texas.

**Edna P. Spencer** authored *What Color is the Wind*. She is Director of Diversity at Worcester State University.



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



Continuation from page 5

### Finding Worcester Women's Stories of the Past

Included in the collection are lengthy, articulate letters home to Worcester written by Sarah and Lucy Chase while they were teachers in the South (beginning in January 1863 in Virginia) describing their experiences and observations. Sarah, who was in poor health, stopped teaching in 1866, but Lucy continued in Virginia and Florida until 1869. After teaching they traveled in Europe, writing home letters and keeping fragmented journals. In 1902, Lucy visited Cuba and wrote several articles based on her observation of Cuban life and social customs.

As Northern troops moved into the South toward the end of the Civil War, Lucy and Sarah were able to secure numerous documents and papers from the offices of recently vacated buildings. These papers (from the office of a Richmond slave dealer, the office of Jefferson Davis, the plantation of Governor Henry A. Wise, and the headquarters of General Ulysses S. Grant at City Point, Va., have been separated from this collection. The papers of the slave dealer, R. H. Dickinson and Brother, have been placed in the Slavery in the U.S. collection. The Grant and Davis items have been placed in the Civil War Papers collection. The correspondence to Governor Wise is now filed with miscellaneous manuscripts collection (Misc. mss. boxes "W").... Learn more at [www.americanantiquarian.org](http://www.americanantiquarian.org).

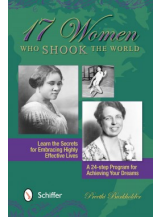
Visit Lynne McKenney Lydick's February 14, 2012 article "Abby Kelley Foster is back and WELCOMED this time!" on the WWHP website to learn about Elizabeth Buffum Chace's review of Abby.

May the power of women's stories throughout history, and the world, keep your creative spirit and courage alive into the future. Thank you Gerda Lerner (April 30, 1920 – January 2, 2013) for your inspiration to tell women's history.

Karen Board Moran's website is <http://windowonyourpast.com/site/>.  
Email: [kboardmoran@comcast.net](mailto:kboardmoran@comcast.net).  
Google her new book  
**Gates Along My Path.**

## Worcester Women's History Project - Worcester Public Library collaboration December 16, 2012

By Dianne Bruce



**Preethi Burkholder was born in Sri Lanka.** She was educated at St. Bridget's Convent, Colombo. Perhaps it was another notable alumna of St. Bridget's, Sirimavo Bandaranaike, the modern world's first female head of state, that inspired Ms. Burkholder to look at the patterns of thinking and acting that drove 17 women to change the world.

Ms. Burkholder (Preethi) provided a glimpse into the lives of a few women described in her book, *17 Women Who Shook the World*, in her presentation at the Worcester Public Library on December 16<sup>th</sup>. The event, sponsored by Worcester Women's History Project and the Worcester Public Library, was inspirational. Each woman demonstrated the courage of her convictions as she set about to change her life and, as a result, the world.



**Wilma Rudolph** weighed just over 4 pounds at birth. At the age of five she contracted polio. Her doctors and family believed that she would never walk again. Wilma did not give up. She exercised and strengthened her legs. In 1960 she became the first woman to win 3 gold medals in the Olympics (100 meter dash; 200 meter dash; 400 meter relay). In a television interview Wilma

Rudolph said, "Winning is great, sure, but if you are going to do something in life the secret is learning how to lose. Nobody goes undefeated all the time. If you can pick up after a crushing defeat and go on to win again, you are going to be a champion someday."

**Amelia Earhart** grew up in a home fraught with adversity. Her father's battle with alcoholism inflicted financial and emotional hardship. "She was a lonely girl who preferred to go solo." On December 28, 1920, she took her first plane ride. She knew she had to fly. Ever the loner, in 1932 she became the first woman to fly the Atlantic solo – and the first person – man or woman – to make two transatlantic journeys by air. She said, "Probably my greatest satisfaction was to indicate by example now and then that women can sometimes do things themselves if given the chance."

**Mother Teresa** worked on behalf of many suffering material and emotional hardship. Born in Macedonia, she was inspired by the reports she read of missionaries in India. She left home in 1929 at the age of 18 to join the Sisters of Loreta. She arrived in India alone with about a nickel. In 1946 she answered what she described as "a call within a call" leaving the Sisters of Loreta to go to the slums of Calcutta. "When I pick up a hungry person from the street, I give him a plate of rice or a piece of bread, and I have removed that hunger. But the poverty of a person who is shut out, who feels unwanted, unloved, terrified, and thrown out from society is far worse. That poverty of feeling unloved is harder to satisfy."

Ms. Burkholder was inspired by these women and 14 more. During a low point in her life she looked at many women who overcame disadvantage to create a life of meaning. Her presentation inspired the audience to take action to create success.

**Would you like to help plan an event for WWHP's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary? Founding was May 1994. Incorporation was September 27, 1995. Contact Nancy Avila at [wwhp.office@gmail.com](mailto:wwhp.office@gmail.com).**

## Mary Cassatt, a Thoroughly “Modern Millie” of Her Time!

*By Marjorie Cohen in collaboration with Linda Miller*

On September 22, 2012, a group of 30 WWHP members gathered together at the Worcester Art Museum to enjoy a presentation by docent Linda Miller about the 19<sup>th</sup> century American Impressionist painter Mary Cassatt.

Mary Cassatt was born in Alleghany City, Pennsylvania, on May 22, 1844, to wealthy parents. Her father was a banker and stockbroker. Her family traveled Europe when she was seven to eleven years old, especially France and Germany. She had the opportunity to visit museums with her parents and became interested in art. The museums of Paris especially inspired her. She realized that she was interested in learning more about art and wanted to attend schools that would teach her the many skills she needed to learn the techniques to develop her own style and subject matter.

When her family returned to America, Mary enrolled in classes at the Pennsylvania Academy of Art in Philadelphia where she studied for three years. This choice was not one made by most of Mary's wealthy contemporaries who chose instead to marry and have children. After three years at the Academy, Mary wished to go back to Paris and to travel in Europe where she might study the great masterpieces of art from the past. Her father declared that if she pursued this path she should never again "darken his door." Her mother, on the other hand, was very supportive of her desire to return to Europe. In fact, when Mary decided to return to Paris to pursue her art, her mother joined her. During the time she lived in Europe, Cassatt was accompanied by her mother and/or friends. As she studied to perfect her art, she worked with fellow Impressionist Edgar Degas, who became her mentor and friend.

Cassatt painted many works of art using her mother, brother Robert, and other family members as models. She also used other women and children, from the village where she summered, over and over again as her models. Since she wanted to show women at their daily tasks and have them appear to contemplate and reflect on their daily lives, she had her subjects look out or away from the viewer's eye.

Cassatt was truly an independent woman. It is interesting to note that she eventually won her father's approval when he realized she had so much talent, many followers, and was selling her paintings.

Eventually Mary's father joined her, her mother, and sister Lydia in Paris and lived there for the rest of his life. He was proud when her art was finally accepted by the judges of the French Salon.

In addition to her exceptional artistic abilities, Mary Cassatt was a very strong and capable woman. She neither married nor had children. In the early part of the 20th century, Mary became interested in the American Women's Suffrage Movement. She contributed her art to major exhibits in New York City in support of Women's Suffrage. She lived to see the ratification in 1920 of the 19th amendment granting women the right to vote. Mary lived to be 82 years of age.



Mary Cassatt, a Self-Portrait

Mary also filled the important role of consultant to wealthy Americans who came to Paris and wished to purchase art. She encouraged them to purchase Impressionist Art. Some of these wealthy Americans left their collections of Impressionist Art, including works by Cassatt, to major American museums. Consequently, we can thank Mary Cassatt for the rich collections of French Impressionism and her own American Impressionism in American art museums.

Linda Miller gave us a fascinating and enjoyable insight into Cassatt's life through her art. Victoria Aberhart assisted with passing around many prints of Cassatt's works showing the development of her style and artistic methods.

Following a wonderful lunch in the Museum Café, our group was divided in two for “Woman as Artist, Woman as Subject” tours conducted by Linda Miller and her friend WAM docent Victoria Aberhart. Cassatt's works are much sought after and admired by many individuals and museum collections in the USA and Europe. As she was especially well known for her works of mother and child subjects, we were fortunate to be able to view and appreciate her “Mother and Child” painting in one of the Museum's galleries.

Thank you to everyone who arranged for this event and, of course, to docents and WWHP members Linda Miller and Victoria Aberhart for their very informative and well-presented account of an artist who demonstrated much courage and determination in her work and advocacy of women in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.





### PROCLAMATION

- WHEREAS:** Radical Abolitionist, Women’s Rights and Human Rights Activist Abby Kelley Foster was born on January 15, 1811 and spent much of her life in Worcester, attending a school in the Tatnuck section of the city and later purchasing with her husband Liberty Farm, which immediately became a stop on the Underground Railroad and in 1974 was registered as a National Historic Landmark and
- WHEREAS:** In 1838, Foster gave her first public abolitionist speech and continued to lecture and raise funds for the antislavery movement for nearly four decades working for the passage of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments of the United States Constitution
- WHEREAS:** In 1850, Foster helped organize and spoke at the first National Woman’s Rights Convention, which was held in Worcester, Massachusetts attended by over 1000 women and men from 11 states when the population of Worcester was 7000 and
- WHEREAS:** In 1851, at the second National Woman’s Rights Convention, which was held in Worcester, Massachusetts, and attended by over 3,000 women and men, Foster delivered a passionate speech imploring that women demand both the responsibilities and privileges of equality and
- WHEREAS:** In 1868, Foster was one of the organizers of the convention founding the New England Woman Suffrage Association where her work was critically important in laying the foundation for the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution and
- WHEREAS:** Abby Kelley Foster was inducted into the National Women’s Hall of Fame, Seneca Falls, NY in October 2011 as the result of a nomination by the Worcester Women’s History Project and
- WHEREAS:** Abby Kelley Foster was inducted into the National Abolitionist Hall of Fame in Peterboro, NY in October 2011 as the result of the co-nomination with the Hall and the Worcester Women’s History Project

**NOW, THEREFORE,** I, Mayor Joseph M. Petty, on the occasion of this Commemoration of the 202<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of her birth and 126<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her death, do hereby proclaim

**Tuesday, January 15, 2013, to be:  
ABBY KELLEY FOSTER DAY**

in the City of Worcester and encourage all residents to recognize and participate in its observance.

**Issued at Worcester on this 15<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2013**

**Joseph M. Petty  
Mayor**



Mayor Joseph M. Petty and  
Lynne McKenney Lydick

After a WWHP program at the Worcester Public Library featuring author and WWHP Steering Committee member C.J. Posk in a presentation of her new book *Stack Up Worcester*, a group of WWHPers walked over to City Hall for the City Council meeting. Mayor Petty read the above Proclamation and Lynne McKenney Lydick spoke.

# 10th Annual Bus Trip

Saturday, June 22, 2012

Tour historic sites in the Hartford area.

**Harriet Beecher Stowe Center**

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

**Mark Twain House and Museum**

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

**The Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art\***

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

**Harriet Beecher Stowe** (June 14, 1811 – July 1, 1896) was an American abolitionist and author. Her novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) was a depiction of life for African-Americans under slavery. ...Wikipedia

**Samuel Langhorne Clemens** (November 30, 1835 – April 21, 1910), better known by his pen name **Mark Twain**, was an American author and humorist. He is most noted for his novel *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) and its sequel, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885),<sup>[2]</sup> the latter often called "the Great American Novel." ...Wikipedia

**The Wadsworth Atheneum** is the oldest public art museum in the United States, with significant holdings of French and American Impressionist paintings, Hudson River School landscapes, modernist masterpieces ...Wikipedia

\* Also lunch here. Details in April.

Event co-chairs **CJ Posk & Hanna Solska**

To keep up to date, check us out on 

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



## WORCESTER WOMEN'S HISTORY PROJECT

30 ELM STREET - WORCESTER MA 01609

MARCH IS ...

**NATIONAL  
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MONTH**

and

**MEMBERSHIP  
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508-767-1852

WWHP emails:  
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[wwhp.office@gmail.com](mailto:wwhp.office@gmail.com)

MEMBERSHIP YEAR IS MARCH TO MARCH

To renew or join WWHP, you may use PayPal online with the form at <http://www.wwhp.org/support-wwhp>, or use this form.

**Support Level**

- Abby Kelleyite \$500
- Reformer \$100-\$499
- Activist \$50
- Supporter \$35
- Family membership \$50

Enclosed is my check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ payable to

Worcester Women's History Project  
30 Elm Street, Worcester, MA 01609.

Mail to ➔

My employer will match my gift.

Company \_\_\_\_\_

Please make my donation in memory of

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