



WORCESTER WOMEN'S HISTORY PROJECT

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

VOLUME 14, NO. 2

20th Anniversary

FALL 2014

The following article was published August 26, 2014, in the WORCESTER TELEGRAM. Reprinted with permission. Margaret Watson is a member of the WWHP Steering Committee.

Struggle for women's equality

AS I SEE IT

by Margaret Watson

Worcester Mayor Joseph M. Petty has proclaimed today, August 26, as Women's Equality Day. On this date in 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution was officially ratified, giving women the right to vote.

In 1971, Congress designated August 26 as Women's Equality Day to celebrate our progress and acknowledge our continuing struggle for equal rights for all.

The recognition is entirely fitting. The first national Woman's Rights Convention was held in Worcester in 1850. Today the Worcester Women's History Project, the League of Women Voters of the Worcester Area, and the City Manager's Advisory Committee continue to promote the cause of equality for women.

America has seen much progress in establishing equal rights for women. In 1850 women, with a few exceptions, were not permitted to manage their own finances, attend colleges for men, or make their voices heard in the voting process. They were legally under the "guardianship" of their father, husband, or another male relative.

In the twentieth century women were given positions in the United States Cabinet and on the Supreme Court. Women are now represented in our state and national legislatures. Currently 20 women are members of the United States Senate, one of them from Massachusetts.

Women are also present in the professions, in business, in college administrations, on police and fire-fighting forces, in town government and in the arts.

At the same time, women have fought for equality for others. In the nineteenth century many suffragists were also abolitionists.

Cont'd on page 4

NOTICE

of

19th ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday, October 18, 2014

2:00 p.m.

Worcester Historical Museum

followed by a talk by

B. Eugene McCarthy

&

Thomas L. Doughton

*From Bondage to Belonging:
The Worcester Slave
Narratives*

-

Booksigning

Light Refreshments

All Welcome

See page 3 for details.

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

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

www.wwhp.org



Thank you! to contributors to this newsletter: Maureen Ryan Doyle, Kara Wilson Yuen, Janet Davis, Lynne McKenney Lydick, Margaret Watson, Ann Marie Shea, Lisa Connelly Cook, Hanna Solska, and Kayla Haveles

The Worcester Women's History Project is observing its 20th anniversary. Its founding was on May 12, 1994, and incorporation was on September 27, 1995. Erin Williams writes: *Happy Anniversary WWHP! You are a true light in the urban landscape. Keep shining it on the great stories of our women's heritage. Thanks for all you do for our city and the region.*

Warm regards,
Erin I. Williams
Cultural Development Officer, City of Worcester

CALLING ALL SPEAKERS!!

The Worcester Women's History Project is establishing a Speakers' Bureau. A number of local organizations look for speakers every year for their programs, especially on topics related to women's history. These organizations include women's groups, churches, PTO school groups, and Senior Centers, as well as others.

We are now asking for members interested in making presentations before these groups to contact the WWHP office (wwhp.office@gmail.com) with their names and list of appropriate topics they can discuss. The topics will be included in a brochure to be placed on our website and made available in libraries and other convenient public places.

Recently a woman's group in the area requested speakers on "Distinguished Women" through the WWHP office. Ann Marie Shea has now scheduled a presentation on Frances Perkins for them, and also Margaret Watson will be speaking about two women publishers, Mary Goddard and Katherine Graham.

If you would like to be included in the "WWHP Speakers' Bureau" brochure, please contact the WWHP office at wwhp.office@gmail.com and submit your name and topics. The deadline for these submissions is Nov 1.



Kathleen Comer & Heather-Lyn Haley were among the hundreds at City Hall in a show of unity against racial hatred on July 22, 2014

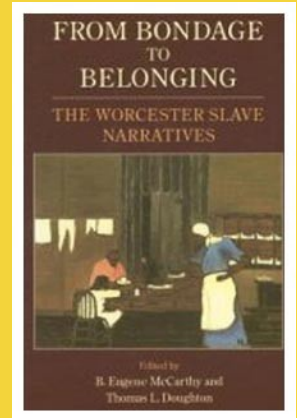
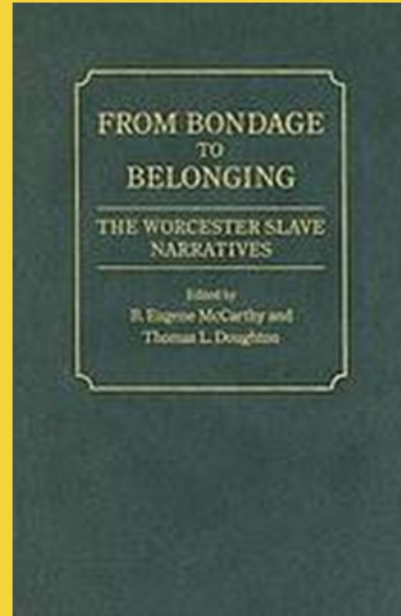
19th WWHP ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday, October 18, 2014

2:00 p.m.

Worcester Historical Museum
30 Elm Street, Worcester

Following the short business meeting, a program will be presented by B. Eugene McCarthy and Thomas L. Doughton who collected and edited the narratives of eight former slaves who made their way north and settled or spent part of their life in Worcester. The narratives are presented chronologically from 1842 to 1895. A book signing follows.



Also, this afternoon a Memorial Circle for WWHP members Laura Howie and Barbara Sinnott will be held.

The public is invited.

Light Refreshments

FROM BONDAGE TO BELONGING: THE WORCESTER SLAVE NARRATIVES

EDITED BY B. EUGENE MCCARTHY AND THOMAS L. DOUGHTON
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS, AMHERST, 2007
Foreword by John Stauffer

Reviewed by Margaret Watson, WWHP Steering Committee member

For their work, *From Bondage to Belonging*, B. Eugene McCarthy and Thomas L. Doughton collected and edited the narratives of eight former slaves who made their way north and settled or spent part of their life in Worcester, Massachusetts.

The narratives are presented chronologically from 1842 to 1895. The headnote to each narrative provides details of the writer's life not found in the narrative itself. These details were provided by Thomas Doughton who researched the history of black Worcester. As a result, this work is a major contribution to our understanding of Worcester's development into modern

times. B. Eugene McCarthy provides the literary commentary on the narratives and describes how the narratives work, distinguishing them from one another.

Hundreds of slave narratives were published prior to the Civil War; only 67 appeared following that war. Of the eight slave narratives in *From Bondage to Belonging*, four were written prior to the Civil War and four following that conflict. We find that by 1861, approximately 175-200 African Americans lived in Worcester and this number expanded thereafter. According to an anonymous letter written to the "Weekly Anglo-American" published in April of 1861, the African Americans in Worcester were painters, harness makers, shoe-makers, barbers, hairdressers, upholsterers, job cart men, paper hangers, and house cleaners. One was a teacher of music. There was also a literary society of about twenty members, both men and women who met weekly.

Worcester by mid-century was an energetic center of black activity. Former slaves, their children, and grandchildren lived in clustered communities. Members of the white community in Worcester hired blacks and interacted with members of the black community. (*Cont'd on p5*)

Struggle for Equality *(Cont'd from p1)*

The struggle for equality still continues, however, especially in business and the workforce. Women make a salary of about 77 percent of what men earn for the same job. This inequality affects a woman for her entire life, as her pension in old age will be 23 percent lower than that of her male counterpart.

The "glass ceiling" — while metaphoric — is very real in many companies. An overwhelming majority of CEOs are male, while 70 percent of minimum-wage earners are women.

We also need to take a long look at coverage provided for women's health, which is more limited than coverage provided for men. Today, thanks to the work of many researchers, including Gregory Pincus and M.C. Chang of the Worcester Foundation, women have more control over their own bodies, but many must subsidize the costs personally.

Equality in the health area is important for all women to realize their potential and make contributions to our communities.

While we celebrate Women's Equality Day on August 26, we need to support the principles of equality all year.

First, we should become educated in current issues and exercise our right to vote. The franchise was dearly won, and by absenting ourselves from the polls, we fail those who fought hard for our access to the ballot box, and we fail those who need our voices to be heard.

We should also encourage and support young women who wish to pursue training and education befitting their talents. Many positions in our towns and organizations remain vacant because so few women are willing to serve.

For those who have the time, energy, and commitment, municipal town committees and local boards would welcome input from interested new members.

Finally, we should continue to support those who still seek equal rights in their communities. The quality of our own life is bound up in the quality of the whole society.

No woman is an island.

Today we take pride in our city for being at the forefront of the fight for equality. We learn best from history when we listen to the voices raised for just causes, women such as Lucy Stone from West Brookfield, Zara CiscoeBrough of Grafton, and others whose faces look down upon us from the walls of Mechanics Hall. These lessons can help us find our own voices when they are needed.

The Worcester Women's History Project joins the celebration of our history, for according to our mission statement we emphasize "the pursuit of equality and justice, the discovery of connections between the past and present to benefit the future, and the research, documentation, and celebration of women's history."

Let us rejoice in our progress on this day, but let us also be mindful of the work that yet needs to be done and continue to pursue equality for ourselves and for all.

Margaret Watson is a member of the Worcester Women's History Project and its Steering Committee, and was formerly Dean of Academic Affairs and Professor of Humanities at Quinsigamond Community College.

Ukrainian Delegation in Worcester

The International Center of Worcester (ICW) contacted WWHP for a speaker to talk to a delegation visiting from Ukraine on April 3, 2014. Lisa Connelly Cook presented a program based on her research on the history of feminism in Worcester. She ended with an overview of the work of WWHP up to the present time, highlighting the recent unveiling of Abby's letters online. The visitors represented a range of human rights and justice work, from accessibility for people with disabilities to respect for all gender identities and gay rights, and included media, education and business sectors. The presentation led to a lively discussion about local history and present situations in Ukraine and in the United States.



President's Message

by Dianne Bruce

Your support of Worcester Women's History Project is vital. You are instrumental in keeping alive the memory of the struggle for equality. The Worcester Women's History Project, The League of Women Voters and the City Manager's Advisory Committee on the Status of Women attended the City Council meeting on August 19th where Mayor Joseph Petty read a proclamation declaring August 26th Women's Equality Day in Worcester. The United States Senate and House of Representatives have also designated August 26th as Women's Equality Day to commemorate the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment.

Several young people, both men and women, asked me why we should celebrate the day. We must commemorate the day so that we do not forget the efforts of so many who fought for the rights of women. Equally as important, Worcester Women's History Project also celebrates the role of the radical abolitionists from Worcester who fought for equality for all people.

It is sobering to realize that my mother was four years old when the Nineteenth Amendment passed. More amazing, women in Kuwait did not gain the right to vote until 2005. We must not take this important privilege for granted. It saddens me that so few citizens exercise their right to vote. With your support, as we continue to provide education and programming across the community, I hope more and more people begin to value their right to have their voice be heard through the ballot box. We deserve the vibrant community that is gained through participatory government.

I invite you to join us as a committee member or as a participant at one of our events. Your financial support is always appreciated. You help us to raise awareness and thereby invite conversation.

Why celebrate Women's Equality Day? While it may be overused, I must quote George Santayana, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." If we do not celebrate and value our hard won rights and take them for granted, it is as if we never won.

FROM BONDAGE TO BONDING... (Cont'd from p3)

For example, the first Stephen Salisbury hired a black day-laborer named Worcester Winslow to assist in the building of what is now the Worcester Historical Museum. Black children attended schools with white children. In 1846 the Zion Methodist Society organized to create the African Zion Episcopal Church in Worcester. Also by 1861 Worcester had established the Worcester Anti-Slavery Society.

The eight accounts are autobiographical as the writers describe their passage from slavery to freedom. Yet each voice is different, as the perspectives of each varies according to his or her experiences and priorities. Seven of the narratives were written by men, and one narrative by a woman, Bethany Veney.

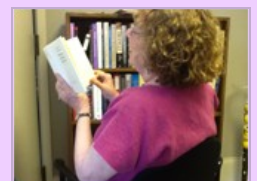
Bethany Veney, a slave born in Virginia, was purchased by two individuals from Rhode Island and then set free. She traveled to Rhode Island and was separated from her husband and daughter. After moving with her employer to Worcester, she decided to remain here. Ms. Veney was a founding member of the African Methodist Episcopal Church which was organized in 1867. This AME church was the city's second black

Congregation. Bethany worked as a domestic and was able to purchase a home on what is now Winfield Street. Several hundred residents of Worcester today are descended from Bethany Veney, a woman well respected in her life and remembered by many.

In their work *From Bondage to Belonging*, McCarthy and Doughton present the individual voices of eight former slaves with scholarly integrity and great sensitivity. This collection covers an important chapter in the history of Worcester, an account often overlooked or ignored.

WWHP LENDING LIBRARY

Our office at the Worcester Historical Museum has a wonderful collection of books, thanks to the donations of Jeana Edmonds and Peggy Kocoras, plus miscellaneous donors. Many aspects of women's history and women's lives are included in the collection. To borrow a book, visit the WWHP office at the Museum and ask at the front desk to be admitted to the office. Upon selecting a book or two, sign the card for each book in the file box on the bookcase. Instructions will be on the front of the box. If you have any questions, refer them to Mary Plummer or Nancy Avila. Thanks also to Louise Gleason for her work on the project. Happy reading! - Mary Plummer





Dr. Carl Keyes to Speak at December Event

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 is pleased to host a presentation by Dr. Carl Keyes of Assumption College on December 3 at 5:30 p.m. at the Worcester Public Library. Dr. Keyes' lecture is entitled *Undergraduates Doing History: Integrating Oral History Projects into Humanities Courses*. In this presentation Dr. Keyes will discuss the value undergraduate students in humanities courses derive from not only conducting oral history interviews, but also from the preparation of transcriptions

and other documents for deposit in an archive. The permanent repository for the 300 oral histories collected by WWOHP is the Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America at the Radcliffe Institute of Harvard University.

Dr. Keyes said, "This process makes the students active participants in the unfolding of history and, especially, the recording and shaping of history since it requires them to act as scholars themselves rather than relying on resources (books or lectures, for instance) produced by other scholars for their consumption. As a result, many students make better connections between the content and skills emphasized in their courses and so-called "real life" applications. In addition, oral history projects integrate students into a community of scholars in ways that writing essays or exams do not."

The presentation in December will focus on how Dr. Keyes has integrated oral history projects into his history courses, and will also include examples drawing from other disciplines, including Spanish and Women's Studies.

Dr. Keyes holds a Ph.D. and an M.A. Degree in History from Johns Hopkins University, an M.A. Degree in History, American University, and a B.A. Degree from Univ. of Michigan.

This event is part of the ongoing mission of the Worcester Women's History Project to promote the research of local women's history and to offer educational programming to the Worcester community. This presentation is free of charge and open to the public. For further information, you may contact Maureen Ryan Doyle at MRyandoyle@aol.com or 508-829-6968.

WWOHP Co-Chairs Conduct Workshop 2014 Mass History Conference

by Maureen Ryan Doyle

WWOHP Co-Chairs, Charlene L. Martin and Maureen Ryan Doyle, presented a workshop at the 2014 Mass History Conference at the College of the Holy Cross on June 2. Their presentation focused on the importance of recording, collecting, and sharing the personal and historical memories of women throughout Central Massachusetts.

During their presentation Martin and Doyle highlighted the important role of Worcester in the struggle for women's rights. The first National Woman's Rights Convention was held in the city in 1850, a fact that has been omitted from many history texts. They also discussed WWOHP's ongoing work with area colleges where tutorials are provided to educate students about the value and uses of oral history. They also emphasized the importance of student-interviewers, and how those students have gained insight not only into the



history of the Greater Worcester area, but also into the day-to-day successes and challenges of modern day Worcester women. While many of those undergraduates have become involved with WWOHP through history courses at the colleges and universities they attend, various other disciplines have partnered with WWOHP as well. These include Women's Studies, Art, Urban Studies, Latino History, Deaf Studies, Foreign Languages, Philosophy, English, Geography, Gerontology, Psychology and Chemistry.

The tenth annual Mass History Conference was entitled, *Never Done: Interpreting the History of Women at Work in Massachusetts*. Harvard scholar Laurel Thatcher Ulrich gave the keynote address. The conference is regarded as an excellent skill-sharing opportunity for historians throughout Mass.



Voices of Worcester Women: 160 Years after the First National Woman's Rights Convention

By Charlene L. Martin & Maureen Ryan Doyle, Co-chairs of the Worcester Women's Oral History Project, may be ordered online at <http://www.wwhp.org/support-wwhp/voices-worcester-women> Cost is \$15 which includes shipping and handling. Net Proceeds benefit Worcester Women's History Project.

*Thank you
to
our members
and supporters
as of Sep. 1*

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Dina Ingrassia*
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Marjorie Purves
Annette A. Rafferty *in memory of my
mother Lillian and her sisters, Mary, Alice,
Ethel and Josephine*
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Worcester Women's History Project
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 mjljdavis@aol.com.

Obituary of Barbara Sinnott, member of WWHP Steering Committee from 2009-2014



Worcester - Barbara J. (Mack) Sinnott, 80, passed away at home February 17, 2014 surrounded by her loving family and friends after a brief illness. Barbara was born and raised in Worcester, daughter of Julia and Dennis Mack. She leaves her children and grandchildren- Denise Pisegna of Worcester, Jillian, Ashley, and Justin Pisegna, Valerie Quitadamo and life companion Gerald Powers, both of Worcester, Jeffrey Sinnott

of Worcester, Jonathan and Cheryl Sinnott of El Paso, Texas, her brother John and Betty Mack, Julie and Greg Mack of Cocoa Beach, Florida, her lifelong best friend and sister-in-law Mary Duca. She leaves many beloved relatives which include Duca, Zendgian, Johnston, Puzar, Collins, Mack. She leaves her loving cats Wylee, Jasper and Smokey.

She was an inspiration to many through her family values and through her community activism.

She was a 1955 graduate of Worcester State Teacher's College and enjoyed being an educator for several years and studying at Harvard and Boston University before starting her family.

In 1957, she was married to Joseph A. Sinnott of Worcester (died in 2004) and had 4 children; Denise (Pisegna), Valerie (Quitadamo), Jeffrey, and Jonathan.

Barbara was a proponent of women's rights, and was active with the League of Women Voters and Worcester Women's History Project, the Alcohol and Beverage License Commission, Worcester Regional Research Council, Worcester Family Services, Board of Trustees of Worcester State University. She was past Vice Chair of Massachusetts Republican Party and was instrumental in getting candidates elected on the State and Federal level.

Barbara served as a Worcester City Councilor /Vice Mayor, Administrator of Easter Seals, was appointed to Health and Human Services Provider Review Board in Washington, DC, and was president of The Better Business Bureau of Central New England until her retirement in 2003. She will be greatly missed.

Calling hours will be from 4-8 pm. Wednesday Feb. 19 in Caswell-King Funeral Home 474 Grove St. Services and burial will be private. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to either the Barbara J. Sinnott scholarship fund at Worcester State University or the Julia Mack Scholarship Fund, Worcester State University. *Published in Worcester Telegram & Gazette from Feb. 17 to Feb. 18, 2014*

The Better Business Bureau of Central New England announced the dedication of the Barbara J. Sinnott Training Center and the BBB Consumer Education Foundation's Barbara J. Sinnott Scholarship Fund.

Obituary of Laura Howie, member of WWHP Steering Committee 1995-1996, 2003-2009

Worcester - Laura C. Howie, a longtime resident of Worcester, passed away peacefully at Worcester Health Center on Thursday, May 15, 2014. She was 83 years of age.

Laura was born in Watertown, one of three children of the late Gordon G. Howie and Ethel (Patten) Howie. She was a graduate of Skidmore College and received her Master's Degree in Home Economics from Simmons College. She taught home economics for many years for Auburn Public Schools. Laura was active in many organizations including the First Unitarian Church of Worcester, the Clara Barton Birthplace as a docent, the Association of American University Women, Worcester Women's History Month, and Skidmore University alumni.

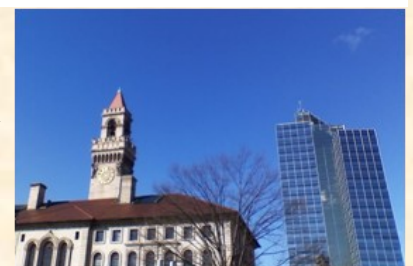
Laura was the loving sister of the late Donald L. Howie, MD, and the late Malcolm P. Howie. Caring sister-in-law of Virginia F. Howie of Dunedin, FL. Dear aunt of Douglas Howie of Gavle, Sweden, Bruce Howie of St. Petersburg, FL, and Lynn Howie of Holiday, FL, and of great nieces and nephews in Sweden, and cousin Jeanne Struck of Tucson, AZ.

Relatives and friends will gather in honor of Laura's life for a Graveside Service at Wyoming Cemetery, 205 Sylvan St., Melrose at a date and time to be announced. Memorial donations may be made to the First Unitarian Church of Worcester, 90 Main St., Worcester MA 01608, or the Clara Barton Birthplace Museum, P.O. Box 356 North Oxford, MA 01537. For directions, online tribute or to share a memory, visit: RobinsonFuneralHome.com. *Published in Worcester Telegram & Gazette from May 21 to May 22, 2014.*



Laura Howie at a WWHP table display at Tatnuck Bookseller in 2000

Photo from www.skyscraperpage.com



11th Annual**WOMEN IN PRINT 2014**

A Review by Kara Wilson Yuen



The 11th annual WOMEN IN PRINT was held on March 19, 2014, at the Worcester Public Library. Upon arriving at the library's Saxe Room for the event, I was pleased to find a warm, welcoming atmosphere created by the WWHP Membership Committee with a table set up to greet people as they entered and a refreshment table set up by the WWHP Events Committee, who organized this annual event. I also enjoyed viewing the artwork by Nancy Skamarycz displayed on the walls around the room.

Shortly after 5:30pm, WWHP President and Worcester Public Library Board of Directors member Dianne Bruce approached the podium to begin the event. Ms. Bruce referenced the membership table at the entrance and spoke about several upcoming WWHP events. She then introduced the "eclectic" mix of authors, beginning with Patricia Glodis, author of *Snooky*.

Patricia Glodis has spent most of her life in Worcester and grew up in the Quinsigamond Village neighborhood with her five sisters. Ms. Glodis mentioned that she mostly writes poetry and admitted to being a novice at writing children's books, but she wanted to write a story about her "beloved dog Snooky." Ms. Glodis began by reading the introduction to her book, which set the scene of Quinsigamond Village in the 1940s and 1950s. As she read, she displayed Amy M. Archambault's illustrations for the book on a screen, which captured the time-period nicely. She also showed illustrations of Snooky and of her family. According to Ms. Glodis, "Most families would choose a dog, but Snooky chose us." Snooky was a rebellious, mischievous dog, but a very loyal dog. He would follow Ms. Glodis and her sisters to school each morning and afternoon, causing the principal to want to give Snooky an award for perfect attendance. In addition to the school and her home, Ms. Glodis mentions many other places around Quinsigamond Village in the book, making it not just a story about Snooky but also a first-hand account of Worcester during the 1940s and 1950s.

The second author was Susan Elizabeth Sweeney, who holds a PhD in American literature from Brown University and is currently associate professor of American literature and creative writing at the College of the Holy Cross. Dr. Sweeney lives in Worcester now, but grew up in Baltimore surrounded by many old items owned by family members. Her most recent book of poetry entitled *Hand Me Down* was written to "remember loved ones through objects that were once important to them." The first poem Dr. Sweeney read from this book was "Wish List," which is about her parents asking her which objects of theirs she wanted to have when they passed away. She then read two more poems about her mother from *Hand Me Down*: "Beginning at the End," which is about imagining her mother's death and "In My Mother's Hair," which included many of the expressions that Dr. Sweeney's mother would commonly say and focusing on what it meant to be in her mother's hair. She then read one more poem about her mother entitled, "The Age of Ironing." This poem is

from a book Dr. Sweeney is currently working on entitled *Slow Going*. She followed this with a poem she had never read aloud before, "Instructions on Streetwalking" which is her "only Worcester poem." Dr. Sweeney read two poems about her late sister: "The Farewell" and "Saving a Place For You." She finished by reading her latest poem "Beginning Riding," which discusses taking horseback riding lessons, and "Sweet Oranges," which talks about eating oranges with her husband.

The final author of the evening was C.J. Posk, author of *Worcester Stacks Up: Firsts and Fun Facts*. Ms. Posk is a strong advocate of Worcester and created her book in the hope of "developing in children a love of the history of Worcester" and to show the humor in history. When Ms. Posk returned to Worcester after living in Denver for several years, she noticed there were no books for children about Worcester. She decided to take on the task of writing such a book, in spite of being legally blind. In her research, she discovered she had a list of "United States firsts" that had happened in Worcester. These discoveries set up the structure for the book. Ms. Posk wanted to have "history as entertainment", so the second part of the book is a "Did You Know?" segment with fifty trivia questions in the back about famous Worcester firsts. Ms. Posk wants to present the book to schools with the help of her editor, Cheryl Cory, with whom she has been putting on trivia contests around Worcester for children and also at the Worcester Historical Museum and senior centers. At the trivia contests, questions are asked from the book and prizes are handed out. This has been a good way of getting the book out to the public. Ms. Posk and Ms. Cory asked some of the trivia questions to the audience at WOMEN IN PRINT, including a question about *Casey at the Bat* author Ernest Thayer, who came from Worcester, and a question about Revolutionary War patriot, Deborah Sampson. In addition to the trivia contests, word is spreading about *Worcester Stacks Up* through a donor who wants to put the book into libraries, schools, and colleges. Ms. Posk came up with the title because she "stacked up" all of the firsts under different categories and arranged the book by subject matter instead of chronologically.

Dianne Bruce returned to the podium to thank the audience for coming and to encourage everyone to visit with the authors if they would like to purchase books and have them autographed.

I was pleased to learn that Sarah Harker, an intern at WCCA-TV, Channel 13, videotaped WOMEN IN PRINT to show on local television. Many thanks to the WWHP Events Committee for all of their efforts in organizing another inspiring and informative WOMEN IN PRINT 2014.

The 12th Annual WOMEN IN PRINT

will be held in March 2015.

ABBY GOES DIGITAL!

Greeting the audience in 1850 style, Mary Plummer and Tom Lydick welcome folks to the Worcester Historical Museum for Dr. William Casey King's talk about Abby Kelley Foster's role in 19th century reform.



Abby Goes Digital! held March 27–29, 2014, was sponsored by the American Antiquarian Society, Mechanics Hall, Worcester Historical Museum, and Worcester Women's History Project

Thursday, March 27, 2014, at 7:00 p.m.
Worcester Historical Museum

Abby Kelley Foster: The Unsung Hero of Abolition - Lecture and discussion with Dr. William Casey King. This lecture placed Abby and Worcester in the larger national narrative of the 19th century social reform movements of abolition and women's rights. Dr. King is a scholar, author and distinguished lecturer and past Executive Director of the W.E.B. DuBois Institute for African and African American Research.

Friday, March 28, 2014, at 5:00 p.m.
Boydston Salon, Mechanics Hall

Accessing Abby - a celebratory event to launch and unveil the online collection of letters of Abby Kelley Foster. Heard were comments from the sponsoring partners and also Dot Willsey, president of the National Abolition Hall of Fame in Peterboro, NY. The online collection was viewed. A talk was given by the artist, Charlotte Wharton, who painted Foster's portrait which hangs in Mechanics Hall.

Saturday, March 29, 2014 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
American Antiquarian Society

Suffragists, Teetotalers, and Abolitionists: Social Reform in the Nineteenth Century, a Hands-On-History workshop for K-12 teachers, museum professionals, and general public. The workshop featured a lecture and discussion with scholar Thomas Augst and two hands-on sessions in which participants worked directly with original materials from the AAS collections. The newly digitized letters of Abby Kelly Foster were explored and procedures provided on how to access and utilize these primary source documents. The day concluded with a performance by Lynne McKenney Lydick of *Yours for Humanity—Abby*.

The three events were supported in part by the Greater Worcester Community Foundation.



Dot Willsey, President of National Abolition Hall of Fame; Kathy Frederickson; Lynne McKenney Lydick, actress, *Yours for Humanity—Abby*; Lisa Connelly Cook, first President of Worcester Women's History Project

Abby Online

by Lisa Connelly Cook, first president of WWHP

The rollout of Abby Kelley Foster's digital presence was celebrated in Worcester during the last weekend of Women's History Month (March) this year. The unveiling of Abby's letters from the online collections of both the American Antiquarian Society and the Worcester Historical Museum was certainly a reason to celebrate. These collections have previously been available to researchers and writers who were able to personally visit the archives, but now anyone can view the artifacts through a computer with access to the internet.

Lynne McKenney Lydick, who portrays Abby Kelley Foster in the one-woman play, *Yours for Humanity—Abby*, proposed the idea that these two Worcester cultural institutions bring their collections together—virtually. Now with *Abby Goes Digital!*, each online collection of Abby's letters includes a link to the other, making a seamless transition possible for researchers to move between the two, including about 600 letters. Lynne's commitment to bringing Abby's writings to the internet is evident in her work as a liaison among the institutions, shepherding the project through to completion. (Cont'd on p11)

Dr. Casey King wrote on April 4th:

"Abby Kelley's letters were once hidden treasures available only to fortunate scholars and enlightened others lucky enough to have the time and expertise to "find her" in the excellent archives and historical repositories in Worcester. Digitizing those letters is the single most significant investment one can make letting the world know of her passion for human rights, her work at ending slavery, and her contribution to the woman's rights movement. It is an affirmation that history belongs to everyone, and ensures that Abby Kelley's contribution to the world that we now take for granted is never forgotten."



Abby Online (Cont'd from p10)

At the Worcester Historical Museum on Thursday, March 27, historian **William Casey King** spoke about the significance of Abby Kelley Foster's grassroots activism. He said that the digitization of Abby's papers reflects the democratization of history. We tend to forget how dangerous and radical anti-slavery activism was in Abby's day. Dr. King noted that anti-slavery students at his own high school were expelled in the 1830s. Speaking in Philadelphia in 1838, Abby truly risked her life with her shocking words. He also mentioned the work of activists today, tracking online digital footprints to find human traffickers, who might learn something from the anti-slavery work of the past. He reminded the audience that grassroots movements are hard to study because there was little documentation of their activities. That is why it is so important to make Abby's letters available to the public. Abby never wrote an autobiography, so her letters are one of the few windows we have into her life and activism.

Dot Willsey, a visitor from the National Abolition Hall of Fame in Peterborough, New York, joined the activities in Worcester dressed in a "bloomer" costume, pantaloons popularized in the 1840s. Dot noted that Abby Kelley Foster may be the only person inducted to both the NAHOF and the National Women's Hall of Fame in the same year. That happened in 2011, the year of Abby's 200th birthday.

Abby Kelley Foster's online letters were presented at Mechanics Hall on Friday, March 28, with a demonstration and tutorial by **Bill Wallace** (WHM) and **Ellen Dunlap** (AAS). Following the reception, **Charlotte Wharton** spoke about her experience painting the portrait of Abby about 15 years ago, as the audience looked up from their seats at the amazingly lifelike portrait hanging in the Great Hall. Charlotte said she had been especially moved by Abby's religious commitment, and that she had come to feel Abby's presence in the studio with her. Charlotte discussed some of the symbolism she included in the painting, such as the three flashes of bright white paint in her scarf, cuff and paper to represent the Christian understanding of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Abby's motivation. She said the many layers of paint used to create the dark color of her dress represented the depths of evil she faced. Her upturned left hand indicated a beseeching or request.

We will have to wait and see how Abby's online letters will be used by writers, artists and scholars in the future. But surely anyone who wants to know something about grassroots activism, the life of an outspoken woman who pursued unconventional work and lifestyle for a cause she believed in, or the challenges faced by an anti-racist pro-woman organizer who literally risked being arrested or killed to raise an alarm about injustice would benefit from taking a look at these collections.

Charlotte Wharton wrote on April 4:

Dear Lynne, Thank you for a lovely evening with you, Abby and her friends. It was incredible being a part of such an exciting and wonderful event as having Abby's papers and letters going digital for the world to see. Thank you, too, for the beautiful flowers, note cards – painted by a dear departed art friend, and for the generous gift card. An evening I shall not forget.

*Love and Hugs (Helping Us Grow Spiritually)
Charlotte*



The audience is listening to artist Charlotte Wharton describe her painting of Abby Kelley Foster.

Abby Goes Digital! Workshop

at the American Antiquarian Society on March 29, 2014
by Janet Davis, WWHP Steering Committee member

As part of the *Abby Goes Digital!* celebration weekend in March, the American Antiquarian Society held a Hands-On History Workshop, *Suffragists, Teetotalers and Abolitionists: Social Reform in the Nineteenth Century*, in which participants were able to see and touch some of Abby Kelley Foster's original letters. I was fortunate enough to participate in this amazing day-long workshop. Under the tutelage of visiting scholar Thomas Augst, participants were immersed in the reform movements of the nineteenth century. The first half of the day was devoted to exploring reform and print culture and the career of John B. Gough, a noted temperance speaker. After lunch, the network of Abby Kelley Foster was investigated through an examination of Abby's letters. What a thrill to see Abby's words in her own script on paper! As the title of the celebration weekend implies, these letters have now been digitized and are accessible through the American Antiquarian Society website (<http://www.americanantiquarian.org/abby-kelley-foster-papers-finding-aid>). Of course, the finishing touch to the day was a performance by Lynne McKenney Lydick of *Yours for Humanity—Abby*. Lynne had worked tirelessly to see the realization of Abby's letters available in an easily-accessible digital format. Lynne's passion for Abby Kelley Foster is truly infectious.

WWHP Travels to Newport, Rhode Island!

Review by Margaret Watson, WWHP Steering Committee member



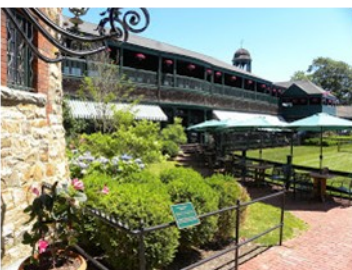
Saturday, June 28, dawned bright and beautiful as thirty-three members of the Worcester Women's History Project boarded the bus that would take them to Rhode Island. In the morning we toured the **Newport Art**



Museum. The building was initially owned by the John A. Griswold family. This fine old home, built in the premier American Stick Style, is now a National Historic Landmark. A newer and smaller building, the **Cushing Gallery**, has been erected more recently on that site. It is now owned by the Art Association of Newport. The Newport Art

Museum boasts a fine permanent collection, including works by Gilbert Stuart and Catherine Morris Wright. In June works by Richard Morris Hunt were on display. The exhibition was titled "A Very Simple Charm."

In the early 1900's the **Art Association of Newport** was formed. Its founders were very much interested in the advancement of women in the arts. Maud Howe Elliot, daughter of Julia Ward Howe and herself a well-known author, was a founding member of the Art Association of Newport. Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, noted sculptor, also joined Maud in promoting the arts created by women. Interestingly, the twin daughters of Harriet Beecher Stowe, Eliza and Harriet, were active in the Art Association of Newport.



Lunch was served at the **La Forge Restaurant**, a well-known restaurant located on the grounds of the Tennis Hall of Fame. It has been owned by the Crowley family for thirty-eight years and boasts a menu offering traditional Irish cuisine.

We were then given time to explore and shop at the various establishments along Bellevue Avenue. We continued our tour along the streets of

Newport and stopped at **Rough Point**, the home of heiress Doris Duke. This mansion was built over a four-year period and completed in 1892. Frederick William Vanderbilt was the first owner of this English manorial-style home. He sold the mansion to William Bateman Leeds Sr., and the estate passed to Leeds' widow who sold the mansion to James Buchanan Duke in 1922. Buchanan had made his fortune in electrical power and tobacco. He was a benefactor of Duke University. Upon his death, the estate passed to his widow and ultimately to his only surviving child, Doris, who was only twelve years old at the time of her father's death. In the early 1950's Mrs. Duke ceased to visit Rough Point, but the home became a favorite of Doris, who made the house her residence in summers most years. She also owned homes in Hawaii and New York but travelled extensively. Doris refurnished Rough Point according to her eclectic tastes, including Asian, Indian, English, and American furniture and art, as well as pieces from the Continent of Europe. Many original and

important paintings and sculptures grace the halls and rooms of the mansion. Her bedroom boasts a fine collection of furniture inlaid with mother-of-pearl.

During our visit, we viewed a special exhibit of Doris Duke's clothing collection. The dresses were varied, ranging from the simple "little black dress" to more lavishly decorated gowns. Once called the richest woman in the world, Doris had the means to indulge her tastes and even become a fashion setter as the world watched.

Doris Duke was an animal lover. She owned ten dogs (all at once) who were brought to her bedroom each morning by the butler who also served breakfast at the same time. She also owned two camels, Princess and Baby, who browsed on the grounds surrounding the mansion. During one hurricane, Miss Duke moved the camels into the solarium for their safety, and one camel, upon seeing her own reflection in the mirror, took a bite out of the frame. The damage is still visible.

Doris Duke had been married twice, once to James H.R. Cromwell and then to Porfirio Rubirosa, but she left no surviving children. Her estate was left to various individuals, including her butler, but the bulk was left to philanthropic organizations, including animal protection agencies. Doris Duke was unique. Her mansion has been preserved as she furnished it; nothing has been added or subtracted since her death in 1993. Rough Point is currently owned by the **Newport Restoration Foundation.**

The tour of June 28 proved to be a unique, well-organized, and valuable experience. Thanks go to CJ Posk and Hanna Solska for arranging this wonderful trip.

The Gleasons



Revolution of 1774 Re-enacted in Worcester

by Ann Marie Shea. WWHP Steering Committee member

A coalition of dedicated scholars, artists, and re-enactors commemorated a little known event in our nation's history in a day-long celebration Sunday, September 7.

As related in Ray Raphael's book, *The First American Revolution: Before Lexington and Concord*, British rule in the colony of Massachusetts effectively ended on September 6, 1774 through the actions of nearly 5,000 militiamen from all over Central Massachusetts. More than half a year before the battles of Lexington and Concord, in the shire town of Worcester, British



A 21st century Bigelow woman shares tea with her 18th century "relatives." From L. Nancy Bigelow (4th generation niece of Timothy Bigelow), Liz Jones (portraying Anna Bigelow), and Sharon Burnston (portraying Elizabeth Bigelow)

appointed judges were forced to renounce their duties to the crown. This action meant that British troops and authority could no longer operate outside the isolated town of Boston.

The ringleader of the movement was Timothy Bigelow, a Worcester blacksmith. James David Moran's specially commissioned play, *The Chains of Liberty*, performed twice during the day at Worcester Area Ministries under the direction of J. T. Turner, linked Bigelow's craft to the metaphor of the chains that continued, even into the republic to enslave black people. The play stretches the bounds of creative license to create a strong character for Mary Stearns, hostess of a tavern where the patriots assembled. In fact, there is little documentation on the historical Mrs. Stearns, but as depicted in Moran's play and performed by Marci Diamond, she is a feisty and crafty businesswoman. But even in this embellished fictional version, Mrs. Stearns appears apolitical, unlike Winslow Worcester, "manservant," (*i.e.*, slave), to Tory Timothy Paine (played by Bill Mootos). Winslow, ably portrayed by Trinidad Ramkissoon, explicitly comments on the irony of white colonists proclaiming that all people are

Liberty Farm, a stop on Walk Bike Worcester Women's History Bike Tour

The last stop for Walk Bike Worcester's Women's History Bike Tour was Liberty Farm, former home of the family of Abby Kelley Foster. Judy Fask said, "Today's bike ride was awesome! Beautiful weather, great group of people—young, old, families. The turnout was amazing—about 45 people. Mary Plummer, dressed in 19th century dress, was docent. All the docents on the tour were fantastic and the entire day was truly wonderful." The day was Sunday, May 11, 2014.



Revolution of 1774... (cont'd from previous column)

equal, while maintaining the legitimacy of the institution of slavery. But Mrs. Stearns, as depicted in the play, limits her concerns to running her business, never urging her customers to remember the ladies. Bigelow (James Turner), broke the "4th Wall" of the drama several times to request reading of resolutions from the audience. In the spirit of the age, only male voices were heard.

It was a different story on the lawns of Salisbury Mansion, where visitors were invited to join Anna, wife of Timothy Bigelow and her mother-in-law, Elizabeth, for tea and conversation. Interpreters Liz Jones of Concord, NH, and Sharon Burnston of Epsom, NH, brought the historical figures to life. They were joined by a real-life Bigelow woman, Nancy Bigelow, a fourth generation grand-niece of the revolutionary blacksmith.

Congratulations to all the volunteers on the planning committee for commemorating the Worcester Revolution of 1774.

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.

Yours for Humanity—Abby

ACCOLADE received after a January 15, 2014, performance at Abby's House:

As a board member of Thoreau Farm, the birth house of Henry David Thoreau, I've seen many an historic re-enactor at work. While most of them are fine historians, very few have developed acting ability. The difference in power and engagement brought about by Ms. McKenney Lydick's obvious acting talent and experience makes an enormous difference in both the experience of the performance as well as the staying power of what has been learned. I was moved and changed by what I saw in Yours for Humanity—Abby.

Abby travels to Florida, New York

On September 18, 2014, Lynne performed for a fundraising event for the William H. Seward Homestead Restoration Project in Florida, New York, and performed the next morning at the Warwick Valley Middle School, Warwick, New York.

WWHP & Emily Dickinson meet in Podcast

by Kayla Haveles, WWHP Steering Committee member

This past spring, WWHP Steering Committee member and American Antiquarian Society (AAS) outreach coordinator Kayla Haveles and Worcester Historical Museum (WHM) librarian Robyn Conroy took a trip to the Emily Dickinson Museum to record a podcast about the digitization of the Abby Kelley Foster Papers held at both AAS and WHM. The conversation covered not only the online availability of the papers (gigi.mwa.org/res/sites/AKFoster), but also information about Abby's life, WWHP, and the success of *Yours for Humanity—Abby*. The podcast will be part of a series about current cultural projects relevant to Emily's world and times. The podcast is not yet available online, but keep an eye on the Emily Dickinson Museum's website (www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org) and WWHP news for its posting soon.

All Things Abby

In her reincarnation of Abby Kelly Foster, Lynne McKenney Lydick not only brings to light the outstanding accomplishments of one of America's first and finest abolitionists and social reformers, but helps audience members connect to her character on an emotional level. After watching her performance, the only questions I was left with were why haven't more people heard of Abby Kelly Foster? And how can we keep her spirit alive?

Join the **All Things Abby Committee** to do just that. Committee members will work in spreading Abby's message and her spirit by identifying and contacting organizations, schools, colleges and any other group which may be interested in booking a performance. Won't you join us? For more information, please contact Nancy at wwhp.office@gmail.com or call and leave a message at (508) 767-1852.

BOOK the Play

Yours for Humanity—Abby is a program of the Worcester Women's History Project and co-authored by WWHP members Carolyn Howe and Karen Board Moran. This inspiring one-woman play based on the letters and speeches of Abby Kelley Foster premiered in January of 2004.

Travel back to 1854 and enter Abby's world—a tumultuous time when social and political differences divided our country. **Hear** Abby's emotionally powerful orations against slavery and prejudice, which changed the hearts and minds of many. **See** how one person can effect extraordinary changes in society by sheer determination, perseverance, and hard work.

To book the play, call 508-767-1852 or email info@wwhp.org. The play can be adapted to any setting. It is designed for ages 5 to 100.

- A question and answer period follows the play.
- For school bookings, a curriculum packet aligned with the Massachusetts History and Social Studies Frameworks is available at www.wwhp.org.

Abby Kelley Foster was inducted into the
National Abolition Hall of Fame and the
National Women's Hall of Fame
in 2011

20th Anniversary of Worcester Women's History Project

...began with a celebration on the date of the founding May 12 at the home of Heather-Lyn Haley and will end with the 20th Annual Meeting in Fall 2015.



Holly Nylander, Betty Hoskins



Jeana Edmonds, Lisa C. Cook, CJ Posk



Lisa C. Cook, Nancy Avila



Louise Gleason, Connie Tuttle

Worcester Women's History Project is a magnificent example of women's vision and implementation. Every time I see our four "foremothers" portraits in Mechanics Hall, I am reminded anew of but one example of what WWHP has accomplished in the last 20 years. Congratulations and best wishes for the future. - Senator Harriette L. Chandler



WORCESTER WOMEN'S HISTORY PROJECT

30 ELM STREET - WORCESTER MA 01609

www.wwhp.org

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and

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

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2009 to 2014 issues of the WWHP newsletter are now on the website in .pdf. Go to www.wwhp.org and click on the tab NEWS & EVENTS.

Upcoming Events

Saturday, October 18, 2014, at 2:00pm, at Worcester Historical Museum.

19th Annual Meeting of Worcester Women's History Project followed by a program presented by B. Eugene McCarthy and Thomas L. Doughton. See page 3.

Wednesday, December 3, 2014, at 5:30pm, at the Worcester Public Library.

Lecture by Dr. Carl Keyes of Assumption College entitled, *Undergraduates Doing History: Integrating Oral History Projects into Humanities Courses*. See page 6.

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