



# WORCESTER WOMEN'S HISTORY PROJECT

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



WWHP VOLUME 15, NO. 1

20TH ANNIVERSARY

SPRING

## From the President

Dianne Bruce

*The Worcester Women's History Project is celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> year!*

A great debt of gratitude is given to trailblazers like Lisa Connelly Cook, who said, "Why haven't I heard about this before?" referring to learning that the first National Woman's Rights Convention was held in Worcester in 1850. That one question inspired many women to join together to put Worcester's women's history on the map.

They began with initiating the **Portraits Project at Mechanics Hall** in the late 1990's which resulted in the commissioning of the portraits of Clara Barton, Dorothea Dix, Abby Kelley Foster and Lucy Stone for the Great Hall. The year 2000 saw the culmination of the work of women, community leaders in their own right, who together recreated the first National Woman's Rights Convention as part of the 3-day conference named **WOMEN 2000**.

After WOMEN 2000, members looked at the Vision/Mission Statement: *The Worcester Women's History Project will celebrate and document women's contributions to the history, social fabric, and culture of Worcester and beyond.*

They wanted to continue to highlight the important work of women from Worcester. From radical abolitionists like Abby Kelley Foster to Frances Perkins, the first woman U.S. Cabinet member, who shaped labor law and Social Security, Worcester's women have had a place on the national stage.

As we travel through our twentieth year, the momentum begun in 1994 continues. Our **Trail Guide** highlighting women who lived in Worcester in the 19<sup>th</sup> century is being updated to include women from the 20<sup>th</sup> century. We are able to begin this extensive project thanks to a generous grant to cover phase

one from The George F. and Sybil H. Fuller Foundation. We have established a **Speakers' Bureau**. We continue to celebrate local talented writers with our 12th annual **WOMEN IN PRINT** (See p5.). The **Worcester Women's Oral History Project**, since its launching in 2005, has interviewed over 300 women, and their oral histories are accessible to all at the Schlesinger Library. *Yours for Humanity—Abby*, since its premiere in 2004, has been performed by Lynne McKenney Lydick before over 20,000 people of all ages. Recently, we highlighted the remarkable work of Worcester's **Charlotte Wharton**, the artist who painted the portrait of Abby Kelley Foster which hangs in Mechanics Hall. *(See continuation on p9.)*

### Who is this?



See answer on p11.

**MARCH IS WWHP MEMBERSHIP MONTH**

It's time to renew/join/support the work of WWHP

Please use form on last page.

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## WORCESTER WOMEN'S HISTORY PROJECT

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Telephone: 508-767-1852  
Website: wwhp.org • Email: info@wwhp.org

### STEERING COMMITTEE

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Margaret Watson, Susan Wobst,  
Mary Plummer,  
Dianne Bruce, Nancy Avila

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

- 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.

# SPRING

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



The Frances Perkins Center is located in downtown Damariscotta, Maine, and has an exhibit open for visitors.

**Office & Exhibit:** 170A Main St., Damariscotta, ME 04543  
**Mail:** PO Box 281, Newcastle, ME 04553  
**Call** 207-563-3374, **Email** [info@FrancesPerkinsCenter.org](mailto:info@FrancesPerkinsCenter.org)

**Website:** [www.francesperkinscenter.org](http://www.francesperkinscenter.org)



### How National Women's History Month came into being

The public celebration of women's history in this country began in 1978 as "Women's History Week" in Sonoma County, California. The week including March 8, International Women's Day, was selected. In 1981, Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) and Rep. Barbara Mikulski (D-Md.) co-sponsored a joint Congressional resolution proclaiming a national Women's History Week. In 1987, Congress expanded the celebration to a month, and March was declared Women's History Month. [www.infoplease.com/spot/womensintro1.html](http://www.infoplease.com/spot/womensintro1.html)



*Ahead of Her Time: Abby Kelley and the Politics of Antislavery* by Dorothy Sterling—A review by Barbara Kohin may be read at <http://www.wwhp.org/news-events/news-articles/2011/early-fighter-womens-rights> or find it by searching Barbara Kohin on the ABOUT page. **WWHP has copies of the book for sale.** 508-767-1852



**Congratulations!** Life Leadership Service Awards were presented to WWHP members Heather-Lyn Haley and Sharon Smith-Viles by the Institute for Global Leadership on November 20, 2014. *Life leaders are ordinary people leading extraordinary lives. They live in service to restore faith in humanity.*



**PayPal** 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.



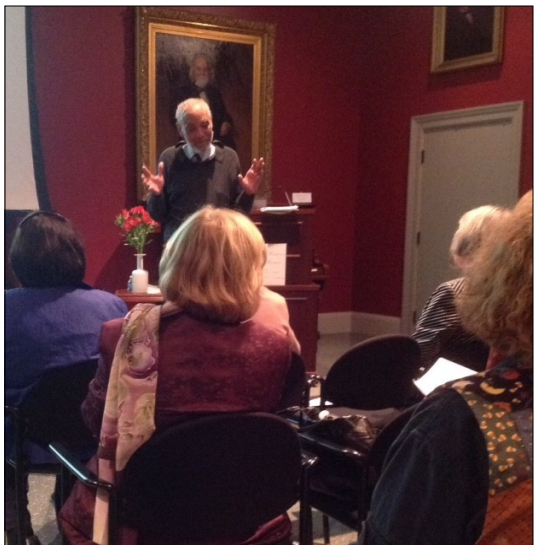
**facebook** "Like" us on Facebook! Get updates about upcoming events and women's history news. <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Worcester-Womens-History-Project-WWHP/111903762230357>



Congratulations! WWHP member Harriette L. Chandler was re-elected as State Senator of the 1<sup>st</sup> Worcester District for her eighth term and also recently named Senate Majority Leader. See her oral history interview at [www.wwhp.org](http://www.wwhp.org).



**Thank you!** to contributors and proofreaders for this newsletter: Ann Marie Shea, Dianne Bruce, Barbara Ingrassia, Mary Plummer, Margaret Watson, Susan Wobst, Kara Wilson Yuen, Maureen Ryan Doyle, Lynne McKenney Lydick



**WWHP 19th  
Annual Meeting held  
Saturday, October 18, 2014  
Worcester Historical Museum**

Prior to the meeting, a reception was held for new members Pamela Bobay, Alexandra M. Gicas, Patricia A. Glodis, Amanda Gregoire, and Susan Simitis.

The Welcome was given by President Dianne Bruce. The meeting proceeded to reports and the election of officers and Steering Committee members. See the current roster on page 2.

A Moment to Remember was given to appreciate former Steering Committee members who passed away this year, Barbara Sinnott and Laura Howie.

Following the annual meeting, a lecture was presented by **Thomas Doughton**, editor, and **B. Eugene McCarthy**, editor, of *From Bondage to Belonging: The Worcester Slave Narratives*. A booksigning followed.

**The SPEAKERS' BUREAU  
BROCHURE is AVAILABLE.  
CALL 508-767-1852 OR  
EMAIL INFO@WWHP.ORG.**

**The Earlier Days of WWHP**

**1994 to 2000 is in the Spring 2014 Newsletter**, <http://www.wwhp.org/news-events/news-articles>

**2001**

*Reclaiming Our Heritage: Worcester Women's History, 1850* exhibit opening at Women's Rights National Historic Park, Seneca Falls, New York, July 4

*The Rich Sisters of Worcester* costumed interpretation of 19<sup>th</sup> century African-American family at Emmanuel Baptist Church

*Difficult Dialogues: Toward More Inclusive Movements for Race & Gender Equality* lecture by Dr. Johnnetta Cole at College of the Holy Cross and Worcester State College

**2002**

*In Her Footsteps: Worcester in the Struggle for Equality in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* launching, with slide and lecture, at WPL followed by walk to former site of Brinley Hall, site of the first National Woman's Rights Convention (340 Main St.) to dedicate plaque for Women's History Heritage Trail

*What Happened to the Women's Rights Movement after the Civil War* lecture by Lisa Connelly Cook, WWHP co-founder

**2003**

*Women's Activism and Leadership, Yesterday and Today* with panel of Worcester women at Worcester Public Library

*My Very Dear Friend: A Personal View of Abby Kelley Foster* with songs and readings at Salisbury Mansion. Co-sponsor: WHM

*Along the Blackstone, Episode #57: Journey to Freedom – The Development of the Woman's Political Voice* videoed at Mechanics Hall with WWHP members participating. Ranger Chuck Arning of Blackstone Valley National Heritage Corridor

*Nothing can be Considered Done: Abby Kelley Foster and the Struggle for Social Justice* at Emmanuel Baptist Church

**2004**

*Yours for Humanity—Abby* premiere of one-woman play written by Carolyn Howe and Karen Board Moran. Lynne McKenney Lydick, actress, at WPL

*Tea with a Twist* at Salisbury Mansion. Co-sponsor WHM

*A Woman's View of Providence - A Walking Tour of Downtown Providence, Where the History of Enterprising Providence Women was Made and Highlighting the Contributions of Worcester Women* - tour guides from RI Historical Society

*Diagnoses across the Decades: An Historical Perspective on Women and Medicine* co-sponsored by WWHP, Briarwood CCRC, and UMMS Women's Faculty Committee at Briarwood Retirement Community answering the question: How has women's health care changed since the first National Woman's Rights Convention in 1850?

**2005**

*Expressions in Art: Women at the Worcester Art Museum* on women founders, donors and staff of WAM

*Women in Print: Worcester County Authors*—Authors reading from their own works: Elizabeth Boosahda, Rachel Kenary Egan, Sou MacMillan, Olive Higgins Prouty by Rosamond L. Bennett, Dianne Williamson held at WHM, co-sponsor

*Votes for Women! Yes or No? A 1915 Debate* co-sponsored with League of Women Voters, Worcester Chapter, at WPL

*HerStory: Bloody Feet, Boardrooms & Beyond – 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Fundraising Celebration* on Oct. 18 at Union Blues, Union Station

*Worcester Women's Oral History Project* launched at Tenth Anniversary celebration

**2006-PRESENT** is at <http://www.wwhp.org/about-us/events/-/exhibits/-/collaborations>



## WWOHP December Event

by Maureen Ryan Doyle, Co-Chair WWOHP



**Dr. Carl Keyes**, center, of Assumption College gave the main presentation, *Undergraduates Doing History: Integrating Oral History Projects into Humanities Courses*, at the Worcester Women's Oral History Project's December 2014 event at the Worcester Public Library. Pictured with Dr. Keyes are other presenters from the program, (left to right) Mikayla Bobrow and Hannah Yore, students at Clark University; Katherine Jankun, alumna of Assumption College; and Andrew Lampi, current student at Assumption College.

## What does WWOHP do?

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

## Oral History Interview



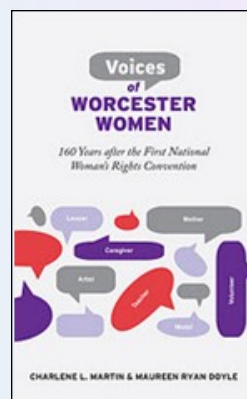
### State Senator

Harriette L. Chandler is the first woman from Worcester to be elected to the Massachusetts State Senate and has also served on the Worcester School Committee and the Massachusetts House of Representatives. She earned her undergraduate degree from Wellesley College in 1959, a Ph.D. from Clark University in 1973, and an M.B.A. from Simmons Graduate School of Management in 1983. She is married to Atty. Burton Chandler and has three children and four grandchildren. In this interview she discusses her childhood, education, reasons for entering politics, being a woman in politics, and the political issues she has championed for the citizens she represents. [Sen. Chandler has been a member and supporter of Worcester Women's History Project for many years and contributed enormously to the success of WOMEN 2000.]

*This is one of hundreds of interviews by WWOHP. It may be read in its entirety on [www.wwhp.org](http://www.wwhp.org)*

### 2009 to 2014 issues of the WWOHP newsletter

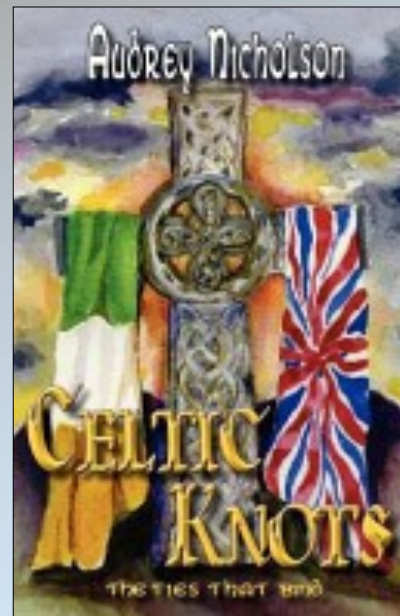
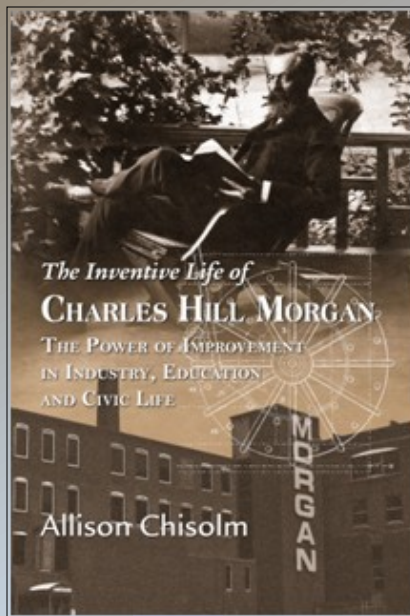
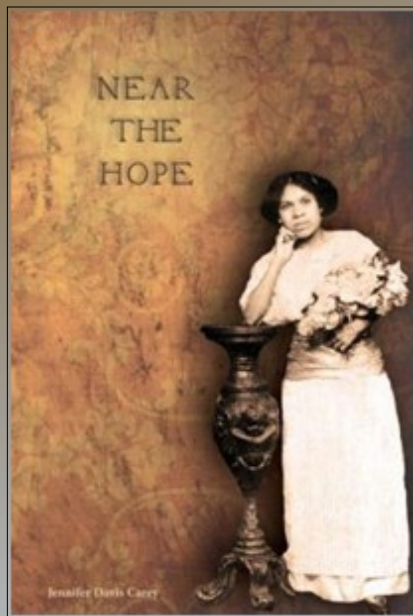
are now on the website in .pdf. Go to [www.wwhp.org](http://www.wwhp.org) and click on the tab NEWS & EVENTS.



**Voices of Worcester Women...co-authored by Maureen Ryan Doyle and Charlene L. Martin** is available through the WWOHP office. It will be on hand at WOMEN IN PRINT on March 18 (see p5). \$12.

12<sup>th</sup> Annual

# WOMEN IN PRINT 2015: Family Histories



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

**Wed., March 18, 2015**

*(Snow date: Wed., March 25)*

**Jennifer Davis Carey** is the author of *Near the Hope* which tells the story of a young woman and her emigration to Brooklyn from Barbados in pursuit of a life freed from the strictures of class, sugar cane, and colony.

**Allison Chisolm** is the author of *The Inventive Life of Charles Hill Morgan*, which tells about how Charles Hill Morgan of Worcester learned to use specialized drafting tools in the 1840s and in the span of 80 years he would go from living hand to mouth in Shrewsbury to taking tea with the Queen of England.

**Audrey Nicholson** is the author of *Celtic Knots: The Ties That Bind*, which tells of an irate young woman in Northern Ireland who, when she confronts her father and his mistress, causes the family disastrous consequences.

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

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

**Free & Open to the Public**

**Refreshments**



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

30 Elm St. Worcester, 508-767-1852, info@wwhp.org

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



## THE FRANCES PERKINS CENTER IN MAINE

By Margaret Watson

The homestead of Frances Perkins in Newcastle, Maine, has now become a National Historic Landmark through the efforts of Tomlin Perkins Coggshall, the only descendent of Frances Perkins. The fifty-seven acre property that Frances Perkins called home will be hosting a celebration in the spring of 2015 to commemorate the new distinction just conferred upon the site.

The Frances Perkins Center was established in 2009 to make the exemplary work and career of Frances Perkins to become better known to the public and to preserve her policy legacy. The ancestral homestead is a private residence maintained by the Perkins family. Guided tours provide a glimpse of the site's history as a working farm, brickyard and home. Educational programs are also given.

Frances Perkins was Secretary of Labor in the Cabinet of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Under her leadership during his administration, signature programs such as Social Security, the minimum wage, and unemployment insurance were instituted. Frances Perkins was the first woman Cabinet Secretary, the principal architect of the New Deal, and a dedicated advocate for social justice, economic security, and the rights of working people.

On Saturday, October 25, 2014, Michael Chaney, the Director of the Frances Perkins Center, gave a presentation at the Worcester Public Library to give information regarding the life of Frances Perkins and the Center. Mr. Chaney hopes to gain support and create liaisons with Worcester organizations to explore future program possibilities and make the activities of the Center more widely known. The Director was especially interested in working with the Worcester Women's History Project.

A ceremony commemorating the life and dedication of Frances Perkins will be held on May 13, 2015, at St. Michael's-on-the-Heights Episcopal Church, 340 Burncoat Street, Worcester. Perkins grew up in Worcester and became an Episcopalian in her twenties when living in Illinois. The event was still in the early stages of planning as this newsletter goes to press, so please watch for further details and let us rejoice in the recognition of the accomplishments in the life of Frances Perkins, an important figure in the history of Worcester and in America.

## FRANCES PERKINS: A Brief Timeline

Following is from Wikipedia:

- Born 1880, April 10 as Fannie Coralie Perkins in Boston
- Died 1965, May 14
- Frances Perkins' feast day in the Episcopal Church is May 13.
- 1898 Graduated Worcester's Classical High
- 1902 Graduated Mount Holyoke College
- 1904-1906 Taught in Chicago
- 1905 Joined Episcopal Church
- 1910 Received Master's Degree, Columbia University
- 1911 Witnessed Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire in NYC
- 1913 Married Paul Caldwell Wilson
- 1916 Susanna Perkins Wilson born
- 1933-1945 U.S. Secretary of Labor
- 1946 Wrote *The Roosevelt I Knew*
- 1952 Husband died
- 1965 She died. Buried in Newcastle, Maine.



Frances Perkins Homestead in Newcastle, Maine



An exhibit at Frances Perkins Center in Damariscotta, ME

## Worcester's Own [Saint] Frances

*The following is an excerpt of an article by Ann Marie Shea in the Spring 2014 issue of the newsletter.*

*If there is among you anyone in need, a member of your community in any of your towns within the land that the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hard-hearted or tight-fisted towards your needy neighbour. <sup>8</sup>You should rather open your hand, willingly lending enough to meet the need, whatever it may be.*  
- Deuteronomy 15, 7-8



With the recent accession of Pope Francis I as head of the Roman Catholic Church, the name of Assisi's compassionate saint is enjoying renewed popularity. But how many people are aware that Worcester has its own [Saint] Frances? (That's "Frances," with an "e," the feminine version of the name.) The saint is a twentieth century career woman, wife and mother, Frances Perkins,

Secretary of Labor in the administration of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, first woman ever to serve in a presidential cabinet, and architect of Social Security. In 2009, the Episcopal Church officially recognized her as a holy woman, or saint, and assigned the date May 13 as her feast day, as listed in the church's calendar of *Lesser Feasts and Fasts*. (The passage from Deuteronomy, above, is recommended reading for her feast day.)

Born in Boston in 1880, Fannie Coralie Perkins (as her parents christened her) was brought to Worcester as a toddler when her father opened a stationery business in the city. After graduating from Classical High School, Fannie earned a bachelor's degree in chemistry from Mount Holyoke College. Thanks to her American History teacher, Annah May Soule, who conducted field trips into the local industries, her middle-class consciousness was confronted with the plight of the working classes.

While teaching science at a girls' school in Illinois, Frances (as she then called herself) was drawn to the Episcopal Church. Abandoning the Congregational faith that she had been raised in (her family worshipped at Pilgrim Congregational Church), she was confirmed in the brand new Church of the Holy Spirit in Lake Forest, Illinois, in June 1905. As her biographer, Kirsten Downey points out, although her religious conversion was sincere, it just also happened to place her in "the most upscale social milieu" and gave her "a ready social stepladder." In the years to come, the common religious bond would ease social -- and political-- access to such important people as Winston Churchill and, of course, the Roosevelts.

## SAVE THE DATE — May 13, 2015

Worcester Women's History Project will commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Frances Perkins on May 13, 2015, at St. Michael's-on-the-Heights Episcopal Church, 340 Burncoat Street, Worcester. Since 2009, the Episcopal Church has recognized Perkins as an Episcopal lay woman worthy of having her own feast day with prayers and music dedicated to her memory.

Perkins, who lived in Worcester during her early years and graduated from Classical High School, was the first female Cabinet member, serving as Secretary of Labor from 1933 until 1945. She is credited with many of the accomplishments of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's "New Deal" including the creation of Social Security. The late afternoon event, free and open to the public, will include musical selections, readings, and other exercises suitable for the occasion. Details are still being developed, and WWHP members and friends are advised to follow the WWHP website ([www.wwhp.org](http://www.wwhp.org)) for updates on planning.

## ETHEL CYNTHIA PERKINS HARRINGTON: The Sister of Frances Perkins

*By Margaret Watson*

Ethel Perkins was born in 1884 to Frederick W. Perkins and his wife, Susan Bean Perkins. Ethel was four years younger than her sister, Fanny Perkins. In 1909 Ethel married Frederick (also Fredrick) Hancock Harrington who was born at 35 Harvard Street in Worcester in 1885. His parents were Eben Harrington and Emma (Etta) Hancock Harrington.

Ethel and Frederick Harrington had three children: Cynthia was born in 1911; Robert Hancock, born in 1914; and Winslow, born in 1916. The family lived in Worcester until 1918 at which time they purchased several lots on Phillips Road in Holden, Massachusetts. Frederick was a dentist. His office was located on Main Street in Holden, and he practiced dentistry there for many years. Frederick Harrington died in 1942.

All three of Ethel Perkins Harrington's children grew up, married, and had children. All three of them are now deceased, but several of their descendents still live in Holden. Son Robert H. Harrington continued to live on Phillips Road in Holden. He married another Ethel (Larm) who served as the cafeteria manager at Rice School in Holden for many years.

Ethel Perkins Harrington and Frederick Harrington are buried in Rural Cemetery in Worcester in the Harrington family plot. Ethel died in 1965. Five names appear on the marker: Eben Harrington, Etta Harrington, Charles T. Harrington, Frederick H. Harrington, and Ethel P. Harrington.

Charles Skillings of the Holden Historical Society contributed substantially to the information in this report. The Holden Gale Free Library also assisted.



## *A Portrait of Abby*

*Reviewed by LynneMcKenney Lydick*

*This program was held Wednesday, January 14, 2015, at the Worcester Public Library.*

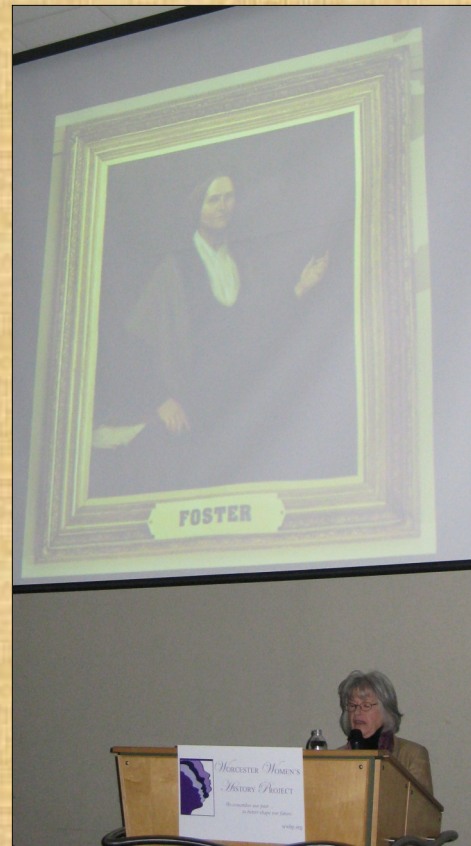
On the eve of Abby Kelley Foster's 204<sup>th</sup> birthday (and the 128<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her death), internationally-recognized painter, Charlotte Wharton, gave a talk about the beautiful portrait she was commissioned to paint by the Worcester Women's History Project in 1998. This important portrait, painted in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century style, hangs in the Great Hall, in Mechanics Hall, Worcester, Massachusetts, with thirty other portraits of significant historical individuals.

In order to get to "know" Abby prior to beginning the portrait, Charlotte told the audience that she was "led on a journey that took her to many venues in Worcester" for research. She read two years' worth of Abby's letters to and from her husband Stephen, to William Lloyd Garrison and others. She researched 19<sup>th</sup> century oratory styles and visited Abby's grave in Hope Cemetery in Worcester. The audience was fascinated as she shared some of her experiences and "the symbolism that are in the portrait which bear great significances. ...but no one would know unless they were thus informed."

She finished with a thank you to the Worcester Women's History Project for awarding her one of the most important commissions of her career.

If you missed this fine talk and wish to learn more about Charlotte's experiences and her painting of Abby's portrait, she is creating and self-publishing a limited edition, hard cover, coffee table-type book entitled *Abby Kelley Foster Portrait Provenance*.

You may contact her through her website at [charlotte@charlottewhartonstudio.com](mailto:charlotte@charlottewhartonstudio.com).



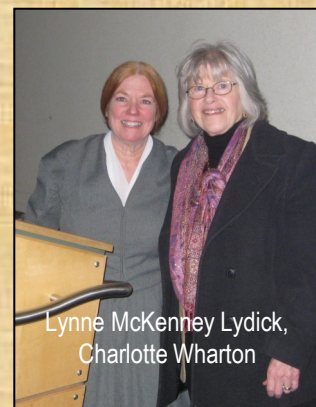
Charlotte Wharton with photo of her painting of Abby Kelley Foster. Photo taken by Betty Jenewin.



Ann Marie Shea, Charlotte Wharton, Mayor Petty, Mary Oroszko



Louise Gleason, Hayley Gleason, Marj Cohen, Dotty Goldsberry



Lynne McKenney Lydick, Charlotte Wharton



## Thanks

Betty Jenewin, skilled photographer and good friend of WWHP, donated her time and energy to take digital photographs of the four commissioned women's portraits in Mechanics Hall. The beautiful photograph of Abby's portrait was used by artist Charlotte Wharton during her talk. **THANK YOU, BETTY,** for your ongoing and continued support of the Project.

*See page 8.*



Thanks to the Membership Committee for always having beautiful displays at events. This was on January 14 at "A Portrait of Abby."



Here is the beautiful cake at the end of the January 14 event.

## From the President *(cont'd from p1)*

Are you thinking you might want to help continue the momentum? As an all-volunteer organization, we need you to share your talents.

We have many committees that need your help. Events, Social Media, Website, Membership, Speakers' Bureau, Oral History Project, and Trail Guide, all have openings for people just like you. Most committees are flexible.

If you are ready to roll up your sleeves and join us, we will try to make the meeting time accommodate your schedule.

In my time with the Worcester Women's History Project, I have been amazed at the incredible accomplishments of this all-volunteer organization. With your help, we can take it to the next level.

We must preserve and celebrate the history of Worcester's women for our daughters and their daughters (and sons as well!).

To volunteer, please contact me directly at [dbruce@edwardstreet.org](mailto:dbruce@edwardstreet.org) so we can find an opportunity that will put your talents to use in a meaningful way.

*Dianne Bruce*

## PROGRESS OF THE SPEAKERS' BUREAU

*By Margaret Watson*

The WWHP Speakers' Bureau is becoming a reality! The brochure has been prepared and is ready to go with twelve topics from which to choose.

Included is the performance of *Madame Secretary*, a portrayal of Frances Perkins by Ann Marie Shea, and a performance of *Yours For Humanity—Abby*, a portrayal of Abby Kelley Foster by Lynne McKenney Lydick. Presentations by Charlene Martin and Maureen Ryan Doyle regarding the oral history project are also available as well as several other topics by other members of the Worcester Women's History Project.

Arrangements can be made through the WWHP Office [wwhp.office@gmail.com](mailto:wwhp.office@gmail.com) or by calling 508-767-1852. The speaker will then negotiate the terms of the contract, the honorarium, and the date of the presentation. The WWHP Steering Committee is requesting that 15% (fifteen per cent) of the honorarium be donated to the Worcester Women's History Project.

Details regarding the Speakers' Bureau are on [www.wwhp.org](http://www.wwhp.org). The WWHP Office is continuing to receive requests for speakers. Thanks to all who have responded to date. The Speakers' Bureau is a service to the community; it enhances the mission statement and the vision of the Worcester Women's History Project; and it educates the public by giving valuable information on matters of importance to them.

## *Yours for Humanity—Abby 12 years and counting.....*

As I start my 12<sup>th</sup> year performing *Yours for Humanity—Abby*, I am thrilled that audience members of all ages continue to say how much they admire Abby and how amazed they are by her courage to stand up and speak out against the evils of the day and her determination to change the world for the better. And I am humbled when I say that many thank me for portraying this remarkable woman and keeping her legacy alive. One student wrote, “I hope you inspire children to be who they want to be.” And one adult said that after seeing the play, she was going to speak up on a rather sensitive and somewhat divisive topic being decided by her church. I received this email a few days later, “The vote passed overwhelmingly. I (among others) spoke up strongly in favor. I was inspired by Abby and you.”



Abby continues to inspire and lead 128 years after her death!

*Lynne McKenney Lydick*

## ***Remembering: A Holocaust Survivor Shares Her Story***

*By Thea Aschkenase*



**Thea Aschkenase** participated in WWHP’s WOMEN IN PRINT 2012 by talking about her memoirs which she was putting into book form. Now the book has been published and she is having a booksigning on Wednesday, **February 25, 2015**, at 3:00pm, in the Blue Lounge, Student Center, Worcester State University. (Snow date: March 12) Her book is described as “*Remembering* is the heartfelt account of Thea, who survived the death camps and went on to make loving contributions to her family, her community, her new country and Worcester State University.”

For more information and copies of the book, please visit the website of the Intergenerational Urban Institute [www.worcester.edu/iui](http://www.worcester.edu/iui) or call 508-929-8900.

## **Speakers’ Bureau programs**

**These are some of the programs available. See more on the Bureau on p9.**

≧*Madame Secretary: Frances Perkins*

Frances Perkins tells her own story in a one-hour presentation.

≧**Approaches to Reconciliation in the Aftermath of Genocide in**

**Rwanda.** Twenty years ago Rwanda was devastated by a brutal ethnic conflict that resulted in nearly a million deaths, mostly among those of Tutsi heritage. In the years that have followed governmental organizations and other groups within society have worked to foster reconciliation between the Hutu and the Tutsi. This presentation provides a bit of history regarding the genocide and a picture of some of the approaches to reconciliation.

≧**An Oral History Workshop: The Art of Asking Questions and Active**

**Listening.** This workshop is valuable for classroom and community projects.

≧**Oral History Projects and the Challenges of Interviewing Immigrant**

**Populations.** This workshop teaches the basic skills of collecting and preserving oral histories emphasizing challenges of conducting interviews with immigrant populations, overcoming language barriers and cultural awareness.

≧**Pocahontas and Sacagawea.** Two remarkable Native Americans, one who converted to Christianity during captivity and embraced the English culture in Colonial America, and the other whom William Clark called his “pilot” for the Lewis and Clark expedition.

≧***Yours For Humanity—Abby***

A portrayal of the life of Abby Kelley Foster, Worcester activist, working for women’s rights in the 1800’s.

≧**Mary Cassatt: American Impressionist and Thoroughly Modern Woman**

**For a complete listing of programs, email [info@wwhp.org](mailto:info@wwhp.org).**



**JEANNETTE RANKIN VISITS  
OAKMONT REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL**

*By Margaret Watson*

On Tuesday, October 21, 2014, U.S. Rep. Jeannette Rankin (alias Margaret Watson) visited the Women in World History Class at Oakmont Regional High School in Ashburnham. About eighty persons were in attendance, including students, administrators, and the instructor of the class, Melissa Martin.

Ms. Martin planned a forum on women in the legislature. Included panel members were Sen. Jennifer Flanagan (Leominster), Rep. Kimberly Ferguson (Holden), and Anne Gobi (Spencer), former representative and a candidate for the State Senate at that time.

The students prepared questions for the panel to which the legislators responded readily. They mentioned difficulties that women face when campaigning for office, criticism of their clothing and personal appearance, and ways they spend their personal time. All spoke against negative campaigning and stated they would not indulge in negative messages in their campaign although all had experienced negative campaigning in their bid for election.

Ms. Watson personified Jeannette Rankin (Montana), **the first woman in the U.S. Congress**. She graduated from what is now the University of Montana and became a social worker in San Francisco and in the East Side of New York City. She became appalled at the poverty affecting women and children, their lack of adequate health care, and the resulting high rate of infant mortality.

**Ms. Rankin believed that women should have a voice in the voting process to make their concerns heard and gain some measure of control over their lives.** She worked with the suffrage movement since only Wyoming and Utah then gave women the right to vote. Through her efforts and those of others, other states, including her own state of Montana, gave women the right to vote.

Jeannette Rankin decided to run for Congress, believing she could introduce legislation that could better the quality of life for women, children, and members of the working class. **She won a seat in Congress in 1914, becoming the first woman in the U.S. House of Representatives.** She said, "I may be the first, but I won't be the last."

Ms. Rankin was well accepted by her fellow representatives, but on her first day, **President Woodrow Wilson asked Congress to declare war against Germany.** Jeannette Rankin voted against entering the war. She thought that war is not a good way to settle problems, that shooting young men was not a solution, and that a few men supported wars because they profited from them economically.

After losing her bid for the U.S. Senate, Jeannette continued her efforts to speak for women's suffrage, child protection laws, and better health care. In 1941 she ran again for the U.S. House of Representatives, serving her second term and again voting against entering war; this time she cast the lone vote against entering World War II.

At the age of eighty-eight years, Ms. Rankin led a protest march in Washington D.C. against the war in **Viet Nam**. Spunky to the last, she continued speaking, passing away at the age of ninety-two. In 1985, the State of Montana placed a **statue** of Jeannette Rankin in the Hall of Statuary in the Capitol Rotunda .

The forum at Oakmont Regional was arranged through the Worcester Women's History Project office. The teacher, Ms. Martin, organized the discussion for her class after reading the article on Women's Equality Day that appeared in the Worcester Telegram and Gazette in August 2014.

**Answer** to "Who is this" on p1 is Frances Perkins. Photo taken 1895-1905. "Young Frances Perkins photograph," *Columbia University Libraries Online Exhibitions*, accessed February 7, 2015, <https://exhibitions.cul.columbia.edu/items/show/325>.



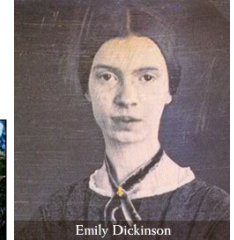
News Staff Photo by JOSEPH BENAVIDEZ  
Margaret Watson, above, portrays Jeannette Rankin, the first woman elected to the United States Congress, giving a passionate speech about women in legislation in America to a group of Oakmont Regional High School students.

## 2015 CALENDAR

**MARCH 18, Wednesday, 5:30pm, WOMEN IN PRINT 2015: FAMILY HISTORIES** (See p5)  
 (Inclement weather date: March 25) at Worcester Public Library's Saxe Room

**MAY 13, Wednesday: FRANCES PERKINS** (See p7)

**JUNE 13, Saturday: 12th ANNUAL WOMEN'S HISTORY BUS TRIP** to Amherst for Emily Dickinson Museum, Jones Library, and Amherst Historical Society & Museum, with lunch at the Amherst Woman's Club. Details will be forthcoming in April.



Emily Dickinson



Amherst Woman's Club



Jones Library



Amherst Historical Society



Emily Dickinson Museum

To keep up to date, check us out on 

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



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