



WORCESTER WOMEN'S HISTORY PROJECT

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

WWHP VOLUME 11, NO. 1

SPRING 2011

March into Women's History

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

The Worcester Women's History Project continues to celebrate its 15th anniversary and the 160th anniversary of the first National Woman's Rights Convention with events in March.

Wed., March 9, 5:30-7:00pm

"WOMEN IN PRINT 2011: History in Poetry and Prose" - See p. 9.

Sun., March 27, 4:00pm

"VISIONARY WOMEN" concert preceded with lecture. See p. 9.

French Women send Letter to Worcester Convention

The first National Woman's Rights Convention, in 1850, was significant for a number of reasons. It marked the beginning of the organized movement for women's rights and called for the total reorganization of "all social, political, industrial interests and institutions." The convention elected officers who were appointed to committees on education, civil and political rights, social relations, and avocations. Its final resolution, which called for "Equality before the law without distinction of sex or color," was highly controversial because of its shocking support of equality for black women. The convention was applauded by a few local and national newspapers, but disparaged by most of them. The issues raised at the convention, however, were heard throughout the world. It became a touchstone for international feminism, inspiring coverage and essays in France, England, and Germany. Jeanne Deroin and Pauline Roland, two French socialist-feminists who were imprisoned in Paris for their political activities, praised the brave efforts of Worcester's women in a letter to the second National Woman's Rights Convention in 1851. Addressing the "Convention of the Women of America," they proclaimed: "your socialist sisters of France are united with you in the vindication of the right of Woman to civil and political equality" (Anderson, 8). <http://www.wwhp.org/Resources/whyworcester.html>



Abby Kelley Foster 1811-1887

200th Birthday Year

Photo used by permission of
Worcester Historical Museum

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**MARCH
IS
MEMBERSHIP
MONTH**

WORCESTER WOMEN'S HISTORY PROJECT

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Karen Folkes, Barbara J. Sinnott,
Dianne Bruce

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.

Visit www.wwhp.org

President's Corner

Dear WWHP supporter,

What a year it is — record snowstorms, school closings and cancellations — a winter to remember! Glad that groundhog didn't see his shadow!! Spring is on its way ...

For WWHP it is indeed a YEAR to remember, starting off with the 200th anniversary of the birth of Abby Kelley Foster, on January 15th. We shared in a birthday celebration luncheon hosted by Abby's House. It was a very special occasion and WWHP is grateful for their gracious hospitality and generous support. Proceeds from the luncheon will benefit WWHP and help to continue our mission. Thank you, Abby's House, for your support and for being a "a bright spot in the city" of Worcester for 35 years!

Do you ever wonder what Abby Kelley Foster would think of all this 200 years after her birth? Would she be surprised that Worcester is the place where "everybody knows her name" (Well, we are working on it!). We hope to have some very exciting news about Abby this spring – watch for it!

This newsletter is full of good news and great upcoming events! Behind every story and event are volunteers who are committed to WWHP. It is challenging for an organization of this scope to function without an Executive Director. As a matter of fact it is darn right incredible!! It can only be done with dedicated volunteers working alongside an extraordinary WWHP Executive Assistant, Nancy Avila. Nancy keeps it all "together" and wrote the grants that resulted in WWHP receiving grants from the Massachusetts Cultural Council and Greater Worcester Community Foundation (BIG THANK YOU, Nancy!) As we celebrate Women's History Month this March, 2011, let's especially celebrate all the women who make WWHP "tick". They are quite remarkable.

If you are looking for a volunteer opportunity, be like our heroine, Abby, and in the Quaker tradition: "look within" ... and let your light shine! Join us in our mission 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 and advance the ideal of the 1850 convention that there should be 'equality before the law, without distinction of sex or color'".

See you in March, my friends.

Fran

LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS INTERESTED IN

Public Relations

Yours for Humanity—Abby

Research

Development

Contact Nancy at wwhp.office@gmail.com

“TRAILBLAZERS BY TIMING, ACTIVISTS BY CHOICE”

A Review of the Celebratory Events Marking WWHP's 15th Anniversary and the 160th Anniversary of the first National Woman's Rights Convention

By Kara Wilson

On October 22, 2010, one hundred people were treated to a wonderful evening in celebration of the 15th anniversary of the Worcester Women's History Project and the 160th anniversary of the first National Woman's Rights Convention. The event was held in the Blue Lounge, located in the Student Center at Worcester State University.

The evening began with a warm introduction by WWHP President Fran Langille, which ended with a moment of silence in honor of Abby Kelley Foster. Langille then called Worcester Mayor Joseph C. O'Brien to the podium to read a proclamation declaring October 22, 2010 as Worcester Women's History Project Day in the City of Worcester. Mayor O'Brien was followed by Senator Harriette L. Chandler, who read a resolution from the Massachusetts State Senate congratulating WWHP on its 15th anniversary. Both the proclamation and resolution were printed in the program booklet we received upon arriving at the event.

After these presentations, we were served an excellent dinner, provided by the dining hall staff at Worcester State University. During dinner, Fran Langille welcomed the Worcester State University Chorale to sing "Happy Anniversary" (to the tune of "Happy Birthday") to WWHP, as part of the Chorale's "birthday gram" fundraiser for an upcoming trip to Germany in May.

During dessert, WWHP founder Lisa Connelly Cook spoke about "WWHP and Community Memory." In her speech, Cook told us the history of how the project was formed and how Women 2000 came together. She named many people who were involved from the beginning; many of whom were in the audience. Cook commented: "Struggles women endured in the past have changed and stayed the same in many ways since 1850." She also mentioned that WWHP is not the first group to recognize the 1850 Convention, but rather it was the Worcester Women's Club, formed in 1880 to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the convention. Cook closed her talk by saying; "The memory of the 1850 Convention has been kept alive by the community."

Fran Langille returned to thank all the past WWHP presidents, past Steering Committee members, and Nancy Avila, who Langille dubbed "the woman behind the women." Langille also thanked many others who made the evening possible, including Louise Gleason for going through WWHP memorabilia; Bill Wallace,

Trying something different.....

This membership year beginning in March we ask that you use the membership envelope inserted here (envelope?) in order to join or renew your membership. (There is no envelope in this edition. In lieu thereof, there is a membership form on the last page which you can use.) Usually, we have mailed appeal letters but this year we thought that if people responded with the envelope/form it would save on printing and mailing costs.

Take a look at this newsletter and you will see every reason for joining or renewing.

Thank you. - Executive Committee

Director of the Worcester Historical Museum; Judy Finkel and the Events Committee; Sue Vogel for the centerpieces; and Lynne McKenney Lydick for the vision of the 15th anniversary event and for her "energy and unrelenting enthusiasm." Langille then adjourned the group to the auditorium for a remarkable performance of "Madame Secretary, Frances Perkins" by Ann Marie Shea, preceded by an introduction from Lynne McKenney Lydick. After the play, John B. Anderson, former mayor of Worcester and Holy Cross professor emeritus of history, led a Q&A session.

The celebratory weekend continued the following day with the WWHP Annual Meeting, held in the Saxe Room at the Worcester Public Library. Fran Langille opened the meeting wearing her costume from the 2000 performance of "Angels and Infidels" and greeted us with the same welcome that was used to open the 1850 Convention. She then thanked those who made the program possible and acknowledged WWHP's receipt of a two-year grant of \$5000 from the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

Langille's President's Report was followed by a report from Events Committee Chair, Judy Finkel. Finkel did a Year in Review of events from 2010, including Women in Print, Abolitionist Family Letters, the bus trip to Plymouth, and the 15th anniversary celebratory events.

We then heard the Oral History Project Committee report from Co-Chairs Charlene Martin and Maureen Ryan Doyle. They recounted OHP programs from the past year, including a talk by Dr. Steven Knott held at Assumption College and a workshop held at the Worcester Historical Museum on how to conduct oral history interviews. They also are in the process of doing research at the Schlesinger Library for a book which will be called Voices of Worcester Women and have many more exciting events coming up in 2011.

(Continued on P 11)

Oral History Event Featured Schlesinger Library Scholar

By Maureen Ryan Doyle



Linda Rosenlund, Charlene Martin, Dr. Jacob, Maureen Ryan Doyle

An exuberant audience comprised of students and faculty from Worcester area colleges, members of the general public, and members of WWOHP, welcomed Dr. Kathryn Allamong Jacob as guest speaker at the Worcester Women's Oral History Project's (WWOHP) December event. Dr. Allamong Jacob is Curator of Manuscripts at the Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America at the Radcliffe Institute of Harvard University. The Schlesinger Library is now the permanent repository for the oral histories compiled by WWOHP. Dr. Allamong Jacob's talk was entitled 'Dear Diary: 100+ Years of Women's Private Writing. She discussed the value of diaries as they relate to women's histories.

An enthusiastic question and answer session followed the lecture, and Dr. Allamong Jacob signed copies of her latest book for those in attendance. Students from Assumption College's Women's Studies course, under the direction of Professors Maryanne Leone and Carl Keyes, also presented projects on oral history that they conducted for WWOHP. Dr. Allamong Jacob is the author of *three* books: *Capital Elites: High Society in Washington, D.C. after the Civil War*; *Testament to Union: Civil War Monuments in Washington, D.C.*; and *King of the Lobby: The Life and Times of Sam Ward*. A social and cultural historian, she has also written for Smithsonian Magazine and American Heritage. This event was held in the Salon of La Maison Francaise on the campus of Assumption College, and was free of charge and open to the public. It was part of the ongoing commitment by the Worcester Women's History Project to celebrate and document the contributions of women to the history, social fabric, and culture of the Worcester area.



Dr. Jacob with Assumption College students

WWOHP Co-Chairs Address Women's Information Network

by Maureen Ryan Doyle

Worcester Women's Oral History Project Co-Chairpersons, Charlene Martin and Maureen Ryan Doyle, spoke at a recent meeting of the Women's Information Network (WIN) at the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce. Their address focused on the mission of the Worcester Women's History Project and the value of women's history, particularly oral history.

The Women's Information Network is a dynamic group that advocates and encourages women to take advantage of the opportunities that are currently available to today's professional women. The goal of WIN is to bring enterprising women together through meetings and special events, thus providing an opportunity for discussion and candid exchanges of ideas.

Following their presentation, Dr. Martin and Ms. Ryan Doyle read excerpts from their upcoming book, *Voices of Worcester Women*, and answered many questions from members of the audience.

Coming up in May — ORAL HISTORY COMMUNITY WORKSHOP —

Learn the basics of oral history: asking questions, art of listening, transcription tips, how to preserve the stories of Worcester women.

Do you want to help collect women's stories or are you interested in the memories of relatives for your family history, then attend the free workshop.

Worcester Historical Museum, Thursday, May 26, from 5:30-7:30 pm.

“WWHP and Community Memory”

Lisa Connelly Cook

For the WWHP 15th Anniversary Dinner

Worcester State University Blue Lounge

Friday 10/22/10

Congratulations!

The Worcester Women’s History Project has not just survived for 15 years, it has thrived and changed and grown. And that is truly a great accomplishment. As most of you know, the organization was originally created to plan a commemoration for the 150th anniversary of the first National Woman’s Rights Convention held here in Worcester in 1850. But even in those first years, many believed WWHP could become so much more than that. And it has. Over the years, before and since the Women 2000 celebration, the Worcester Women’s History Project seems to have found its way by helping the community to remember its past. With so many initiatives, from the women’s portraits in Mechanics Hall to the oral history project, and to this event tonight remembering the life and work of Frances Perkins of Worcester, the first woman to serve as a Cabinet Secretary, WWHP has contributed in so many ways to preserve the memory of women’s contributions in the community.

Old Stories—How it all began.

The anniversary celebration event came to be known as Women 2000, but it all started in the early 1990s. As I began to learn about the 1850 convention, I encountered so many people who were interested and enthusiastic about doing something to commemorate this event, and preserve the memory for Worcester, including many who were already working in some way to preserve the memory of women’s contributions to the Worcester community.

For me, it began with a class I was taking at Clark, through COPACE, while I was working to finish my bachelor’s degree. I learned that Worcester had been host to the first National Woman’s Rights Convention in 1850, and I couldn’t understand why I had never heard of it before. I thought it would be a good idea to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the event. (See Eleanor Flexner’s book *Century of Struggle*.)

In the Spring of 1993, I had heard about an event at Abby’s House, sponsored by the Worcester Historical Museum about 19th century Worcester women. Al Southwick was the featured speaker. I called for more information and directions, and was told that the event was full, so I decided to get there really early. I was the first one there. I remember sitting in the kitchen with Annette Rafferty and Elaine Lamoreaux telling them my idea. They were encouraging and showed me the new book about Abby Kelley Foster that had recently been published. (See Dorothy Sterling’s book *Ahead of her Time*.)

Later that summer, I read Angela Dorenkamp’s article in the T&G, which noted the 145th anniversary of the Seneca Falls Convention. A few weeks later, I met Angela Dorenkamp at an Abby’s House event. I was chatting with Betty Hoskins, and telling her about the article by Angela Dorenkamp that I had just read, and how I wanted to write something like that. She said, “Well you can meet her: she’s standing over there!” I had to wait for about 20 minutes to talk with her, because she was talking to Harriette Chandler. When I eventually was able to introduce myself, and tell her what I was thinking about doing, she said, “You look like you could organize it with two hands tied behind your back!” She was so encouraging. I said, “I’m a secretary.” And she said, “I think secretaries can do anything!”

About a month later, I wrote an article calling for commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the 1850 convention. Nancy Avila, who was my co-worker—we were both legal secretaries at the same Worcester law firm—read drafts of the article and made suggestions, and she encouraged me to send it in to the T&G. It was published in November 1993.

One of the first responses I got was from Sylvia Buck, librarian at the Warren Public Library (Warren is next to West Brookfield—Lucy Stone country.), asking me why I had not mentioned Lucy Stone! (Well, I had just read the book about Abby Kelley Foster and didn’t know much of anything about Lucy Stone.)

I met Ginger Navickas at the YWCA when she popped up from behind the counter in late 1993 after hearing me ask if anyone might be interested in talking with me about commemorating the woman’s rights convention. Linda Cavaoli called me back, and we organized the first meeting to gather “interested participants” including Angela, Annette and Elaine.

(Continued on page 6)

Before the meeting, I called Al Southwick for historical information (His number was listed in the phone book, and he answered the phone!) because I had seen the name Southwick mentioned in the book about Abby Kelley Foster. He said they were probably related, somehow. I told him about the meeting and what we were intending to do. He invited me to attend a gathering of Worcester historians that met regularly at Assumption College to tell them what I was doing.

I met the members of the Worcester History Group at Assumption, including Ken Moynihan and John McClymer, who became very involved in the WWHP and helped us with research. Another member of that group, Bob Cormier (since passed away), had already compiled a database of the attendees at the 1850 convention with the help of his Shrewsbury High School students. That database turned out to be so helpful, and he was so generous to share it.

Peggy Kocoras, another early participant, was another one of my professors at Clark. She taught a course called *Growing up female in the 19th century*, and she jumped right into WWHP.

Karen Moran, a middle school social studies teacher, found us. She had already been doing research on the woman's rights movement.

Somewhere along the line I met Bill Densmore, who, I'll never forget, told me I had "a tiger by the tail." He was so right.

So many people became involved—the energy was impossible to contain. There were so many ideas, and so much excitement. But, you know that—so many of you in this room were there! We had 6 years to get something going, and it did not seem like enough.

By 1995, the group of "interested participants" which was growing and growing had met several times, and had decided to plan a celebration, and to call it Women 2000, and to set up a non-profit organization. I remember contacting the Secretary of State's office to reserve three names for the new organization, one of which was Worcester Women's History Project. (I don't remember the other two.) I had to pay for each of those names, I believe it was every month (I don't know why—I thought somebody might steal those names?!), until the group had decided on a name, and had written and approved bylaws to create an organizational structure. City Councilor Konnie Lukes helped us (at no charge) to

file the paperwork to set up a 501(c)(3) organization. We were soon able to hire Jessie Rodrique as the coordinator for Women 2000. And we were able to raise money to make it happen.

WWHP and Community Memory—keeping memories alive for the future.

Women 2000 gave us an opportunity to remember the past in a very concrete way. Reenacting the original convention (We commissioned Louisa Burns-Bisogno to write the dramatization, "Angels & Infidels."), and also holding a contemporary convention to revisit the issues of importance to the women of 1850, the WWHP explored the significance of the 1850 convention and learned about how Worcester contributed to the feminist movement we recognize today. By remembering the struggles of the past, we realize that so many struggles women face even today are really nothing new.

The Worcester convention's signature call for "Equality before the law without distinction of sex or color"—had touched off a firestorm of controversy, even within the early women's movement itself. This is really what set the Worcester convention apart from the others. While some believed equality for black women and freedom for slave women to be central to the fight for women's rights, many others saw it as a distraction, and the controversy launched the fledgling movement into the stratosphere of public attention, both positive and negative. The memory of Worcester's role in the early woman's rights movement remained strong within the local community for many years.

Beyond racial justice, controversial issues identified as significant by the participants in 1850 included: freedom for women to choose any occupation, and to have every educational avenue open to them, and to have the opportunity to participate fully in politics and government. Yes, these were all controversial issues at the time.

Let's take a minute to remember Margaret Fuller because it is her 200th birthday this year. She was a writer and editor, a journalist, and a transcendentalist, and world traveler, as well as the founder of the Boston "Conversations" for women, a precursor in some way to the women's clubs of a later era. In fact, she was often memorialized by women's clubs who looked to her for inspiration after her death. Fuller was identified by (1850 convention

Fuller was identified by (1850 convention president) Paulina Davis as the preferred choice to be president of the Worcester convention. Unfortunately she died in a shipwreck just a few months before the woman's rights convention took place. But her memory lived on thanks to so many generations who looked to her for inspiration and remembered her life. This year there have been many events to commemorate her birthday, from Concord to Boston.

WWHP was not the first organization started in the city in memory of the 1850 convention. More than a hundred years before the WWHP, the Worcester Woman's Club was started after a local commemoration of the Woman's Rights Convention of 1850. In 1880, a group of women who had attended a party to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the 1850 Woman's Rights Convention were apparently looking for an excuse to start a women's club, I think, which were becoming very popular at the time. The WWC honored women such as Abby Kelley Foster and Lucy Stone, during their lifetimes and after they died.

At the 16th anniversary of the WWC in 1896, which was commemorated with a dinner much as we are doing here, and included ten of their charter members in attendance, one speaker told of some of the club's contributions to the community until that point: they had initiated public kindergartens in the city including a kindergarten for blind children, nurses training programs, and a hospital for contagious diseases. In those days, the WWC was meeting in rented rooms at the YWCA's new building on Chatham Street. Even back then, there was much collaboration among the women's organizations in Worcester. It was about 6 years before the WWC built its own building—Tuckerman Hall. (When will WWHP build its own building?)

When the 19th Amendment was passed in 1920 guaranteeing the right to vote for women, the Worcester newspapers noted that one Sarah Earle, who had been in attendance as a girl at the 1850 convention (She may have attended with her parents, because her name is not on the list of "voters.") was happy to be alive to see women finally get the vote.

In various ways, the memory of the 1850 convention has been kept alive in this community. The event is part of the memory of the Worcester Woman's Club, as the inspiration for its founding in 1880. The event is also included in a story by Al

Southwick in his book *Once-Told Tales of Worcester County*. Abby's House has done much to remember local women from the 19th century to recent times, especially Abby Kelley Foster, whose incendiary speech in support of causes she believed in both shocked and inspired many, even to this day.

Since 2002, when I took a job teaching full time at Quinsigamond Community College, I've been mostly watching WWHP from a distance. I have seen how the organization has continued to preserve community memory in so many innovative ways. It is very important work. I look forward to seeing how it unfolds in the future.

Anniversary celebrations help people to remember events of the past, giving opportunities to talk about what happened and who made it happen. The booklet for this 15th anniversary is just beautiful, and will become a part of the community memory, too.



By the way, I am continuing to research the history of feminism in Worcester, and I'm interested in any information or family stories about women involved with the Worcester Woman's Club, the YWCA, and the woman suffrage movement in Worcester

before 1920. So if anyone has information or can point me to some resources that might be relevant, please contact me: [connellycook\(at\)mac\(dot\)com](mailto:connellycook(at)mac(dot)com).

Thank you.

Lisa Connelly Cook

October 22, 2010



WWHP OFFICE

➡ Are you thinking about learning more about WWHP? Think about volunteering.

ABBY KELLEY FOSTER resources

- Bacon, Margaret Hope.** *I Speak for My Slave Sister: The Life of Abby Kelley Foster*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1974.
- Board Moran, Karen.** *Window on the Past: Revisiting the First National Woman's Rights Convention*. (classroom script), 2000.
- Burkett, Nancy H.** *Abby Kelley Foster and Stephen S. Foster*. Worcester: Worcester Bicentennial Commission, 1976.
- McClymer, John F.** *This High and Holy Moment: The First national Woman's Rights Convention, Worcester, 1850*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1999.
- Sklar, Kathryn Kish.** *Women's Rights Emerges within the Antislavery Movement, 1830-1870*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000.
- Sterling, Dorothy.** *Ahead of Her Time: Abby Kelley and The Politics of Antislavery*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1991.
- Worcester Women's History Project.** *Worcester Women's History Heritage Trail: Worcester in the Struggle for Equality in the Mid-Nineteenth Century*. Worcester, MA: 2001.
- American Antiquarian Society, Worcester**
Abby Kelley Foster Papers
The Anti-Slavery Bugle
The Liberator
- Worcester Historical Museum, Worcester**
Abby Kelley, Stephen and Alla Foster Letter Collection
Kelley-Foster Papers

"All the great family of mankind are bound up in one bundle. When we aim a blow at our neighbor's rights our own are by the same blow destroyed. Can we look upon the wrongs of millions—can we see their flow of tears and grief and blood, and not feel our hearts drawn out in sympathy?"
From *Ahead of Her Time: Abby Kelley Foster and the Politics of Antislavery* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1991), 87-88.

<http://www.wwhp.org/curricula/yours-humanity-abresourcesby/suggested-readings->

Liberty Farm, Liberty Farm, Liberty Farm.....

May 19, 2011, Thursday - 5:30-8:30 pm - An Antislavery Bazaar at Liberty Farm, a National Historic Landmark, 116 Mower Street, Worcester. Meet radical abolitionist and woman's rights activist Abby Kelley Foster, her husband Stephen and their daughter Alla. Hear some of her passionate speeches, tour her family's home, and celebrate Alla's 164th birthday.

Liberty Farm notecards are available for sale at upcoming events, Abby's House and the Worcester Historical Museum



Painting by Emily Boosahda of Worcester and reproduced with permission.

It's 5 x 7.

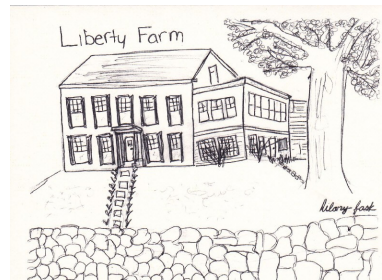
Liberty Farm was the home of Abby Kelley Foster (1811-1887) and her husband, Stephen Symonds Foster, from 1847 until 1881.

Though both were widely sought after as lecturers, in 1847, the couple purchased Liberty Farm, and immediately opened the house to slaves escaping north on the Underground Railroad.

Liberty Farm, a National Historic Landmark, is located at 116 Mower Street in Worcester.

Sketch by Hilary Fask of Worcester at age 12 and reproduced with permission.

It's 4.25 x 5.5.



Worcester Women's History Project

presents

Women in Print 2011: History in Poetry and Prose



*Join us for an evening
with three local authors*

**Wednesday, March 9, 2011
5:30 – 7:00 pm
(Snow date: Wed., March 16)**

**Worcester Public Library
3 Salem Square, Worcester**

Free and Open to the Public

Authors include –

Janette Greenwood, Prof. at Clark University, who has co-taught “Black Worcester” which sparked her interest in the City’s black history and led to her book, *First Fruits of Freedom*, which she will be reading from.

Eve Rifkah, Adjunct Prof. at WPI, who has written two books of poetry.

Jessica Bane Robert, who teaches literature and writing at Clark University, wrote her first volume of poetry, *Scarred Seasons*, in 2009.



Visionary Women

A musical celebration of historic women

4:00 pm, Sunday, March 27, 2011

Tuckerman Hall, Salisbury & Tuckerman Streets with entrance on Tuckerman St., Worcester



The Master Singers of Worcester and the Worcester Women's History Project collaborate to celebrate New England women with music featuring their poetry. Texts by Emily Dickinson, Mary Oliver and Elizaeth Bishop will be featured in choral works by Gwyneth Walker, Ronald Perera and other contemporary composers.

New music by area composers, Martha Sullivan, William Cutter, and Matthew Johnsen, will celebrate the Women's Rights Movement with tributes composed for this concert to Clara Barton, Abby Kelley Foster & Lucy Stone. Other concert guests will include many of these living composers. Mezzo-soprano D'Anna Fortunato and a string quartet join us.

Presented in beautiful Tuckerman Hall, which was designed by Josephine Wright Chapman, one of this country's earliest women architects!

3:00 pm – The Worcester County Poetry Association will present a lecture by Amy Belding Brown about famous New England women poets and their place in history.

Tickets: \$25 Adult; \$20 Senior/Student may be ordered in advance. Please print the ticket purchase form at www.mswma.org/tickets.html and mail it with your check and a return stamped envelope **by March 21** to Master Singers of Worcester, PO Box 7203, Worcester, MA 01605. Info: MSW 508 842-1349 ... WWHP 508 767-1852



This project is funded in part by grants from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency, and the Greater Worcester Community Foundation.



Abby Kelley Foster's 200th Birthday Celebration

By Kara Wilson

On Saturday, January 15, 2011, about seventy people attended a noontime luncheon in honor of the 200th anniversary of the birth of Abby Kelley Foster. The Worcester Women's History Project and Abby's House organized the event. It was fittingly held at Abby's House, a non-profit organization serving homeless and battered women and children, named after Abby Kelley Foster.

The Dining Hall at Abby's House was set up for the event with beautifully decorated round tables for seating eight people, with a homemade birthday cake centerpiece on each table. Abby's House founder, Annette Rafferty, welcomed everyone to the luncheon and then introduced WWHP President Fran Langille, who thanked Abby's House for hosting the event, calling it "A Bright Spot in the City".

These greetings were followed by a lunch catered by Struck Café. Over coffee and birthday cake, Fran Langille introduced Shirley Wright who read the letter she had written in 1999 as her speech on behalf of the Commission on the State of Women at a program held at the gravesite of Abby Kelley Foster on Women's Equality Day. We then were invited to write our own birthday greetings to Abby Kelley Foster, using paper provided on the tables.

Lynne McKenney Lydick, in costume as Abby Kelley Foster, then encouraged all to go to the Worcester Public Library for a lecture by Dr. William Casey King entitled "Abby Kelley Foster: The Unsung Hero of the Abolitionist Movement". Dr. King is the Executive Director of the Yale Center for Analytical Sciences at the Yale School of Medicine and Public Health. Over 100 people attended the lecture, which was engaging and provided a wealth of information about Abby Kelley Foster and her work on behalf of the abolition of slavery. Dr. King invited Lynne McKenney Lydick to perform a portion of "Yours For Humanity —Abby" and recognized Carolyn Howe, co-author of the play, who was in the audience. Dr. King conducted a Q&A session following his lecture.

Many thanks go to Judy Finkel and the WWHP Events Committee for providing refreshments at the lecture and to Louise Gleason and Mary Plummer for handling the information table. The planning committee for both events included Annette Rafferty, Julie Komenos, Alex Kartheiser, Barbara Kohin, Lynne McKenney Lydick, Dotty Goldsberry, and Nancy Avila.

Chair City of the World

by local author and friend of WWHP, Constance Riley, was published in 2008. It includes a section on 19th century abolitionist and woman's rights advocate Lucy Stone of West Brookfield. The main content of the book is about the genealogy of Riley's family and about the history of Gardner, MA. The book is available at amazon.com.



Louise Gleason helping with the move to new office space at the Worcester Historical Museum last October.

Q&A

- What do you think about the website www.wwhp.org? Email Nancy at wwhp.office@gmail.com
- Want to book *Yours for Humanity—Abby*? Email Nancy at wwhp.office@gmail.com
- **Membership Update** since WWHP Fall Newsletter: Those who were omitted from the Fall 2010 newsletter or have joined or renewed since then are Janet E. Cutman, Phyllis Estus, Patricia M. Faron, Karen Folkes, Kathleen Hessel, Marie H. Hobart, Carolyn Howe, Katie Joyce, Anita Kostecki, Dorothea Simmons, Arlene Vadum, Virginia M. Vaughan, Elizabeth H. Westie.
- **The W.I.S.E.** course at Assumption College led by Lynne McKenney Lydick for the five Tuesdays in November received a lot of praise, even drawing one person to join WWHP. Course was entitled "Women in the Struggle for Equality."
- "**Madame Secretary, Frances Perkins**" written and performed by Ann Marie Shea was presented February 15, 2011, at Notre Dame Academy. This was a collaboration of WWHP, Women's Initiative of United Way & Notre Dame Academy.
- WWHP is grateful to the **Greater Worcester Community Foundation** for a grant of \$3,700 towards "Visionary Women" - the collaboration with Master Singers of Worcester on March 27, 2011. See page 9.

“TRAILBLAZERS BY TIMING...” (Continued from P 3)

Mary Plummer gave a brief report from the Membership Committee, which sets up a table at events and conducts the March membership drive. This was followed by Beth Harding's report from the “Yours for Humanity - Abby” Committee. This committee is currently working on finding new places to perform the play, such as public schools and after school programs. Lynne McKenney Lydick also conducted a WISE program at Assumption College throughout the fall entitled “Women in Struggle for Equality.”

Mary Plummer then spoke in Heather-Lyn Haley's place on behalf of the Nominating Committee and commented that Haley is WWHP's liaison with the Worcester Cultural Coalition.

Following approval of the 2009 Annual Meeting minutes and the budget for 2011, Fran Langille mentioned WWHP will be having two events in March, 2011: Women in Print and a collaborative event with the Master Singers of Worcester. A vote was then held to elect officers, Steering Committee, and Nominating Committee, which passed. Election results: President for 1-year term: Frances Langille; Vice President for 1-year term: Doreen Velnich; Treasurer for 2-year term: Barbara Kohin; (Clerk is Mary Plummer until 2011 annual meeting.). Steering Committee 3-year terms: Kathleen Comer, Maureen Ryan Doyle, Patricia Faron, Barbara Kohin, Charlene Martin. Nominating Committee 1-year terms: Heather-Lyn Haley (chair), Karen Folkes, Regina Edmonds, Ellen More and Linda Barringer.

Langille bid farewell to departing Steering Committee members, Arlene Vadum and Heather-Lyn Haley, and adjourned the meeting with an invitation to partake in cider, lemonade, and cookies provided by the Events Committee.

The meeting was followed by Ranger Chuck Arning's presentation, “Developing the Women's Political Voice.” Arning began by discussing an anti-slavery group called Friends of Freedom, which met annually in the Blackstone Valley from 1836-1865. Gradually more women became involved. He then showed a video, which many members of WWHP were involved in making, along with John McClymer from Assumption College. The video particularly focused on Elizabeth Buffum Chase from Rhode Island and Worcester's own Abby Kelley Foster.

The weekend's events concluded with the “Mothers of Conservation Nature Walk,” held at Broad Meadow Brook by the Massachusetts Audubon Society on October 24, 2010. All of these festivities were a fitting tribute to the present and past trailblazers and activists involved in shaping Worcester women's history.

Photos from
October 22
“Trailblazers
...” event



Mayor Joseph C. O'Brien
WWHP President Fran Langille

More photos on
wwhp.org



Dotty Goldsberry



Linda Rosenlund



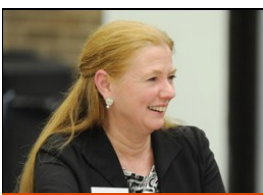
Annette Rafferty, Lisa Connelly Cook,
Alice Cook, Marjorie Connelly



Karen Folkes



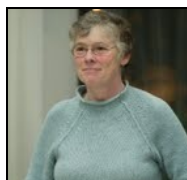
Judy Finkel



Lynne McKenney Lydick



Nancy Avila, Mary Plummer,
Bill Wallace



Carolyn Howe



Sen. Chandler, Fran Langille



Ann Marie Shea as
Frances Perkins



More photos on
wwhp.org



Gathering at 15th Anniversary



Linda Maykel, Nancy Avila



Q&A with
John Anderson



March 9, 2011, Wednesday – 8TH Annual WOMEN IN PRINT

5:30-7:00 PM...Worcester Public Library, 3 Salem Square, Worcester. Local authors Eve Rifkah, Janette Greenwood, Jessica Bane Robert. Free and Open to the Public.

March 27, 2011, Sunday – “VISIONARY WOMEN”

4:00 PM Concert; 3:00 PM Pre-concert lecture by Worcester County Poetry Association Tuckerman Hall, 10 Tuckerman Street, Worcester. Tickets \$25 general; \$20 senior/student, www.mswma.org. Master Singers of Worcester collaborates with WWHP to celebrate the remarkable achievements of New England Women.

wwhp.org

May 19, 2011, Thursday - AN ANTISLAVERY BAZAAR

5:30-8:30 PM... Liberty Farm, a National Historic Landmark. Meet radical abolitionist and woman's rights activist Abby Kelley Foster, her husband Stephen and their daughter Alla. Hear some of her passionate speeches, tour her family's home, and celebrate Alla's 164th birthday.

May 26, 2011, Thursday - ORAL HISTORY COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

5:30 PM Worcester Historical Museum, 30 Elm Street, Worcester - Free and Open to the Public

June 11, 2011, Saturday - ANNUAL BUS TRIP—Edith Wharton's *The Mount*. Details later.



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MEMBERSHIP YEAR IS MARCH TO MARCH.

To renew or join, please complete this form.

Support Level

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

Enclosed is my check for \$_____ payable to
Worcester Women's History Project.

Mail to: 30 Elm Street, Worcester, MA 01609.

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