

The Matilda Joslyn Gage Foundation Newsletter • February 2001

Greetings:

In this, our first communication to you in the new year, new century, and new millennium, we hope to learn more about you and your interests, and share some exciting news about the progress we are making.

Great things are happening at the Gage Foundation!

Diane Hawkins, Newsletter Editor

From the Executive Director:

Two years ago I packed my belongings in a U-Haul trailer in Sacramento, California, to make the long trek to the home once owned by Matilda Joslyn Gage in Fayetteville, New York. My goal was to see if there was sufficient interest to support the creation of an organization to bring Gage back to her rightful place in history.

Now the Matilda Joslyn Gage Foundation is incorporated as a not-for-profit organization in New York State with a national presence and a strong base of local support. We're heading into our second national conference in two years. We have nine Syracuse University interns working with us this semester. Several hundred people have been entertained in Matilda's parlor. Many thousands more have read about her in the excellent full-page publicity we've received and heard about her in talks to local and national organizations.

And Matilda is smiling!

Our national volunteer team of professionals would be the envy of any CEO in the for-profit sector. "We are connected! Yeah! It is energizing!" MJ Broadbent, our NYC logo designer exulted in an email yesterday. Our local team includes women who drive regularly from Seneca Falls and Oswego to work on events. (Too many to thank all at once, we'll introduce you to a few dedicated workers in each newsletter).

It's time to take a breath. We're pausing to build a sub-structure that will grow with us and include for our future plans:

- a state-of-the-art database
- a financial system that automatically generates all the government reports we must file
- a strategic plan for what we want to do in the next three years

We'd like your input in this process. Please take a moment to answer this question: "One thing I'd like to see the Gage Foundation do is _____." Send us your answer via email or US Mail. Our addresses are shown below.

Thanks so much for being our partners in honoring the memory of Matilda Joslyn Gage, a woman who has made a difference and continues to have an impact on people's lives today.

Sally Roesch Wagner, Executive Director

Name This Newsletter Contest

Put on your thinking caps and give us your ideas for a newsletter name. Matilda's own newsletter, reflecting the issues of her time, was called *The National Citizen and Ballot Box*. What would be a worthy successor to this name? We want to identify our dedication to Gage's legacy and spirit, and reach out to her supporters today. Send your ideas to Diane Hawkins at the Gage Foundation office, PO Box 192, Fayetteville, NY 13066. The winner will receive their choice of one of a pin/tie tack, earrings or pendant from our line of handcrafted sterling silver jewelry depicting the home of Matilda Joslyn Gage. The jewelry was custom designed for us by Norman K. Dann of Peterboro, NY. The winner will be announced in the May newsletter.

A Victorian Christmas at the Gage House

Village of Fayetteville mayor, Henry H. McIntosh, expressed his appreciation in a letter to the local newspaper:

"It was great to see such a positive event in our historic district last Sunday, Dec. 10. The Matilda Joslyn Gage Foundation hosted the event, 'Journey Back in Time and Celebrate a Victorian Christmas.' It was great to have a chance to visit with so many fellow villagers, enjoy the refreshments and see all enjoying the horse-drawn wagon rides. The children, I am sure, learned about earlier Christmas time while decorating the Christmas tree. Sally Roesch Wagner, the Foundation Director, and Cynthia Alexander, a member of our historic preservation commission, as well as all the other volunteers, are to be commended. A great turnout, a great event done by some very positive people. I look forward to next year's event."

The success of this event was due to the energy and creativity of volunteer organizers and workers. Thanks go to Barb Evans, Donna Thomas, Cynthia Alexander, Kathy DiScenna, Lynne Pascale, Julie Uticone, Marty Morgenstein, Ed Clark and Tom O'Shea. And warm thanks to Junior docents Sasha Salayda, Ashley Evans, Andy Evans, David Thomas, Natalie Pascale, and Remy Pascale, who guided visitors through the Gage house and provided historical background. Special thanks to Michael Patrick Hearn, author of the New York Times best-seller, *The Annotated Wizard of Oz*, for being on hand to autograph books and add to the festivities.

Gage "Visits" National Conferences

FAYETTEVILLE, NY

Seventy-four people attended the March 24-26th 2000 conference, "The Legacy of Gage," in Fayetteville, New York. They heard presentations on Gage research, enjoyed original art works and musical and dramatic performances in Gage's honor, and listened to family perspectives from Gage descendants. Attendees toured Gage's childhood home and family gravesites, visited libraries holding Gage-related materials, and learned additional details from town historians Barbara Rivette and Lona Flynn.

Evening festivities included a reception for the Honorable Jocelyn Birch Burdick, former senator from South Dakota, Leslie Burdick, Mac Hudson, and Gita Dorothy Morena - all descendants of Gage.

A special ceremony, led by Marie Summerwood with the assistance of Antiga, honored all older women and invited attendees to speak about their discovery of Gage and her impact on their lives. To conclude the ceremony, everyone joined in singing a song written for Gage, "The Battle Hymn of the Suffragists." Energy and excitement generated by the conference ran high. It was an important event in furthering our mission.

NEW YORK, NY

Even though Matilda was not formally listed among events and workshops at the Ms. Millenium Conference in New York City's Hyatt Regency Hotel, October 21, 2000, her presence was certainly felt. Gage activist mother-daughter team - Ms. charter subscriber Gloria Marvin and daughter Mary Jane Broadbent - obtained a prime spot to exhibit Gage materials. The two also wore ribbons sporting Gage's image and the inscription "Ask me about Matilda Joslyn Gage!" Many did ask, and the interest expressed by women of all ages and backgrounds was significant. The latest Gage Foundation flyers were distributed, and all available copies of Gage books were sold.

WORCESTER, MA

The same weekend as the Ms. event, the presence of Gage was felt also in Worcester, Massachusetts at "Women 2000," a celebration of the 150th anniversary of the first National Women's Rights Convention.

Executive Director Sally Roesch Wagner took part in a panel, "Preserving Women's History: Seneca Falls, Worcester and Beyond." Dr. Wagner talked about the National Collaborative of Women's History Sites, of which the Gage Foundation is a founding member.

Gage "Visits" National Conferences • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

MINNEAPOLIS, MN

At the Freedom from Religion Foundation's 23rd annual conference Sept. 15-17, 2000, in Minneapolis, Lo Ross distributed Gage Foundation information folders. The audience had been made aware of Gage through the chapter on Gage in Annie Laurie Gaylor's monumental work, *Women Without Superstition*. Co-founder of FFRF, Gaylor is editor of *Freethought Today*.

BALTIMORE, MD

The Feminist Expo, hosted by the Feminist Majority March 31-April 2 in Baltimore, Maryland, heard a great deal about Gage with three panel presentations by Sally Roesch Wagner. She chaired the panel, "Feminist Challenges to Religion" and participated in "Raising Feminist Children," and "Learning from the Past for the Future."

Eastwood Rotary Foundation Gift

"How did we ever get along without it?" That's our constant refrain as we use our wonderful new Konica 1312 to copy research materials, volunteer forms, materials for our upcoming (March 23-25) Gage Birthday Weekend conference, and notes and budgets for the strategic plan we're working on.

We are a hotbed of organizational activity, as was Gage's house 100 years ago.

Thanks to the Eastwood Rotary Foundation, Inc. and member Bob Batley, who engineered the gift of this equipment. With the help of our friends and supporters, we're well on our way to achieving our goal of restoring this important woman to her rightful place in history.

Sunday Suppers for CNY Locals

Keeping in touch with each other is important. Committee members, volunteers, and other Gage workers are cordially invited to monthly potluck suppers on the last Sunday of every month at 2:00 PM at the Gage house.

Come to be welcomed, enlightened, informed, and well fed. Join us for the warmth of friendship and the joy of stimulating conversation. Bring some food or drink to share when you can. You never know who will be there on a given Sunday. The teapot is always on!

Conversations with Friends from the Onondaga Nation

Matilda Joslyn Gage wrote in her newspaper, *The National Citizen and Ballot Box*, in 1878, "...the Indians have been oppressed—[and] are now...but the United States has treaties with them, recognizing them as distinct political communities and duty towards them demands not an enforced citizenship, but a faithful living up to its obligations on the part of the government." To explore what this and her other writings on the Iroquois mean for us today, we'll be holding a series of informal conversations with Onondaga nation citizens. The first one will be held at the Gage house on April 19 at 7:30 PM.

***"Read it. Examine for yourselves. Accept or reject from the proof offered.
But do not allow the church or the state to govern your thought or dictate your judgment."***

—Matilda Joslyn Gage, speaking about her book, *Woman, Church and State*.

→ **UPCOMING ACTIVITIES AT THE GAGE HOUSE** ←
210 East Genesee St., Fayetteville, NY
 (corner of Walnut and Genesee)

Wed.	February 28	10-12 am	Women's History Roundtable • Cosponsor: Central New York Library Resources Council
Fri-Sun.	March 23-25 (see schedule on page 5)		Writing Women Back Into History and Religion: A Weekend Celebration of the 175th Anniversary of Matilda Joslyn Gage's Birth
Thu.	April 19	7:30 pm	Informal Social with Onondaga Nation Friends
Sun.	April 29	2:00 pm	Get-Together Potluck. Come One, Come All.

We Want to Know!

If you know of any research or activities involving Matilda Joslyn Gage, please inform us. The Foundation aims to build an international network of scholars who are interested in Gage's work, and also to record and archive Gage related projects and publications. If you have items to contribute to our next newsletter, please send by April 15, 2001 to Diane Hawkins at the Gage Foundation.

YOU CAN REACH US AT:

The Matilda Joslyn Gage Foundation
 P.O. Box 192
 Fayetteville, NY 13066
 315-637-9511
 MJGageFoundation@aol.com

Find more information on Pat Cross' Matilda Joslyn Gage website:
<http://www.pinn.net/~sunshine/gage/mjg.html>

Each Newsletter We'd Like to Introduce You to a Few of Our Extraordinary Volunteers

Thanks be to:

- Mary Ann Krupsak* – the first woman lieutenant governor in the United States; our incorporating attorney.
- Mary Jane Broadbent* – Director of Information Architecture, Icon Medialab, New York, NY; logo designer.
- Laurie Carter Noble* – Carter Noble Strategic Marketing and Promotional Materials, Boston; general consultant.
- Gloria Marvin* – Renaissance woman, 5th generation U-U activist/feminist, St. Petersburg, FL; editor.
- Ellen Wass Beckerman* – Director, Technical Center, Cornelius, NC; Macintosh graphics/database consultant.

WRITING WOMEN BACK INTO HISTORY AND RELIGION

A Weekend Celebration of the 175th anniversary of Matilda Joslyn Gage's birth

March 23-25, 2001

During the 19th century, women transformed religion in the United States. They were critics standing outside the church doors demanding an end to women being relegated to second-class status. They were also believers, pushing open those same doors to be accepted as ordained ministers and even establish their own religion. Women attempted to transform the nature of the established church. Ironically, many of these early pioneers have been written out of history.

Matilda Joslyn Gage was perhaps the strongest voice of the 19th century religious critics. Her magnum opus, *Woman, Church and State*, stands today as a feminist classic, necessary, according to feminist theologian Mary Daly, for an understanding of the contemporary woman's movement. Gage believed that the religious right's turn-of-the-century attempt to put God in the constitution and prayer in the public schools represented the gravest danger to religious liberty the country had faced. In 1890, she formed the Woman's National Liberal Union to preserve the First Amendment separation of church and state.

Gage's religious liberalism rankled the increasingly conservative woman's suffrage movement, which wrote her out of subsequent histories of the movement. They also attempted, in 1895, to silence Elizabeth Cady Stanton's *Woman's Bible*, to which Gage was a contributor. Nor were Gage and Stanton the only 19th century feminists lost in the cause of religious liberty. Their coworkers, Jewish atheist Ernestine Rose, women's rights newspaper editor Clara Colby, and the first regularly ordained woman minister, Olympia Brown, are among those who have been deprived of their rightful place in history.

On the occasion of Matilda Joslyn Gage's 175th birthday weekend, we'll gather to remember Gage, her coworkers and those women who first opened the doors of churches to women. We will strategize on how to write them back into history and religion.

Conference Program

FRIDAY, MARCH 23

7:00 PM

SOCIAL FOR WEEKEND PARTICIPANTS

A Life in Letters: M. J. Gage's Correspondence with Olympia Brown and Clara Colby
The Gage House, 210 East Genesee Street, Fayetteville, NY

SATURDAY, MARCH 24

WOMEN WRITTEN OUT OF RELIGION AND HISTORY

Wellwood Middle School, 700 South Manlius Street/Rte 257, Fayetteville

MORNING SESSION

9:00 AM - 12:00 NOON

SILENCED FOR THEIR RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

Gage, her peers and others were written out of history primarily for challenging women's religiously sanctioned subordination. Scholars who have researched these forgotten freedom fighters look at who they were and why they were left out.

- **Matilda Joslyn Gage** – founder, Woman's National Liberal Union; author, *Woman, Church and State*
Presenter: Sally Roesch Wagner, Director, Matilda Joslyn Gage Foundation
- **19th century Suffragist Freethinkers**
Presenter: Annie Laurie Gaylor, co-founder, Freedom from Religion Foundation;
author, *Women without Superstition: No Gods—No Masters*
- **Clara Colby** – editor, *Woman's Tribune*
Presenter: Marlene Snyder, NE Humanities scholar
- **Ernestine Rose** – Jew – Freethinker – Atheist – Jewish atheist?
Presenter: Paula B. Doress-Worters, Founder and Director, Ernestine L. Rose Society
- **Olympia Brown** – first woman in the United States to be ordained by full denominational authority
Presenter: Laurie Carter Noble, consulting editor, *Standing Before Us: Unitarian Universalist Women & Social Reform, 1776-1936*
Moderator: Vivien Rose, Historian, Woman's Rights National Historic Park, Seneca Falls

LUNCH
12:00 NOON - 2:00 PM

BAG LUNCHEES AVAILABLE FOR \$10.00 (See registration form).
A LIST OF LOCAL RESTAURANTS ALSO WILL BE PROVIDED.

AFTERNOON SESSION
2:00 - 5:00 PM

RELIGIOUS WOMEN MAKING HISTORY

Another group of women "firsts" because they demanded their place in religion also were written out of or neglected by history books. Mary Baker Eddy founded a new religion. Unitarian and Universalist women paved the way for women's spiritual leadership in the 19th century by being ordained and serving successfully as ministers, often expanding the notion of ministry to include a broad range of community life. Following in the footsteps of these early women ministers, a courageous group of Episcopalian women demanded ordination in the 20th century. None of these women has yet received proper credit either in women's or religious history.

- **"Universalist and Unitarian Women Re-forming Religion"**
Presenter: Dorothy May Emerson, Executive Director, Unitarian Universalist Women's Heritage Society, editor, *Standing Before Us: Unitarian Universalist Women and Social Reform, 1776-1936*
 - **"Mary Baker Eddy: Daughter of the Old Church, Mother of the New"**
Presenter: Marceil De Lacy, Lecturer from The Writings of Mary Baker Eddy
 - **"Does the Past Still Haunt us? Episcopal Women, Then and Now"**
Presenter: Betty Bone Schiess - one of the first eleven women ordained as Episcopalian priests in the US in 1974
-

DINNER
6:30 PM

GAGE'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION - THE WELLINGTON HOUSE
7262 East Genesee, Fayetteville

EVENING

Special event, TBA

SUNDAY, MARCH 25
10:00 AM

WRITING UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST WOMEN BACK INTO HISTORY SERVICE

First Unitarian Universalist Society of Syracuse, 250 Waring Road
The Reverend Dr. Dorothy May Emerson

BRUNCH
with Weekend Participants
12:30 - 2:30 PM

THE WELLINGTON HOUSE - FAYETTEVILLE

INTERACTIVE
WORKSHOP
3:00 - 5:30 PM

DISCOVERING OURSELVES IN HERSTORY

The Gage House - Fayetteville

Facilitators: Dorothy May Emerson and Janet Gould Matson, author of Whole Woman, Whole Life

Women of history are sources of empowerment for our own lives. They give us the strength of their personalities, help us discover who we are, and show us qualities and power that we carry within ourselves. Knowing how they carried out their visions, we are better informed on how to carry out our own visions of a better society. When we hear the voices of these women who stand before us and blend our own voices to the song, we carry an anthem of tremendous power and vibrancy into the future.

MATILDA JOSLYN GAGE CONFERENCE 2001 REGISTRATION FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: (Day) _____ (Evening) _____

Email: _____

CONFERENCE FEES:

- | | | |
|---|--------|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> All weekend events (meals included) | 135.00 | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> All weekend events (without meals) | 75.00 | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday morning | 25.00 | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday afternoon | 25.00 | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sunday afternoon | 25.00 | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student/Senior full weekend (meals) | 120.00 | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student/Senior full weekend (no meals) | 60.00 | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student/Senior single session | 20.00 | \$ _____ |

MEALS:

Meal registration only available through March 16. Limited to first 50 requests.

- | | | |
|--|-------|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday reception/dinner buffet | 30.00 | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday bag lunch | 10.00 | \$ _____ |
| Specify one: <input type="checkbox"/> vegetarian <input type="checkbox"/> turkey | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sunday brunch | 25.00 | \$ _____ |

SUPPORT:

I would like to support the conference by contributing in one of the following ways and be listed in the program:

- As a sponsor (financial contribution of \$1000 or more)
- As a supporter (\$250 or more)
- As a friend (by providing a scholarship for someone on a limited budget)
- By announcing the weekend in a newsletter (enclose contact person and deadline)

Total fees and meals: \$ _____

My contribution: \$ _____

Total enclosed: \$ _____

- I am a student and would like to work in exchange for my registration fee.
- I'd like to apply for a scholarship.
- Please send me lodging information.

Send this form and check or money order (sorry, no credit cards), to:

Matilda Joslyn Gage Foundation

PO Box 192

Fayetteville, NY 13066

For further information email the Foundation at MJGageFoundation@aol.com or call 315-637-9511 or visit the Gage web site at <http://www.pinn.net/~sunshine/gage/mjg.html>

Join the Gage Tech Team Today!

Dear Friends,

The very heart of a foundation is its information system, its database — and a weak heart can bring anything to a standstill. **Recently, the Gage Foundation was given an extraordinary gift. Ellen Wass Beckerman, Foundation friend in North Carolina who is in the business of creating technical databases for large corporations, offered \$15,000 worth of her services to custom design a database for us.** This state-of-the-art work allows us to track members and provides a wide range of printing capabilities—newsletter, booklets, brochures. It also gives us visual and audio presentation potential. Ellen even offered to train people!

Trusting in feminist economics, we went forward. The Board said, "Go ahead," a generous supporter lent the money, and equipment was purchased so Ellen could set up the system she created.

Total cost for computer and software? \$2,800.00. Please read on.

Ellen spent a week training volunteers. She has given us the promised \$15,000 of her services. Generously, she has offered to continue working with us until we have a perfect system, exactly what we need. And Mary Hudson, computer wizard at nearby Syracuse University, also offered to trouble-shoot at our end.

Now, here is your golden opportunity!

The Foundation needs you, and I'm sure you can gauge the benefits. For your donation of \$28.00, you can become a founding member of the "Gage Tech Team." The Tech Team is filling up fast, so don't delay. Join now!

The first 100 members waltz our Matilda right into the computer age. It's Gage supporters like you who make success possible.

With deep appreciation,
Sally Roesch Wagner

YES! SIGN ME UP AS A FOUNDING MEMBER OF THE "GAGE TECH TEAM"

ENCLOSED IS MY CONTRIBUTION FOR \$28.00 _____ OTHER \$ _____

Make checks payable to:

The Matilda Joslyn Gage Foundation
PO Box 192
Fayetteville, NY 13066

Please write "Tech Team" in Memo portion of check

"The True Religion is that which sets people free"

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March 23-25, 2001

Sponsored by the Matilda Joslyn Gage Foundation

with the support of

The Unitarian Universalist Women's Heritage Society, Inc.

The Writings of Mary Baker Eddy

LeMoyne College Women's Studies

Syracuse University Women's Studies

FOR MORE INFO: Call (315) 637-9511 or Email: MJGageFoundation@aol.com

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

The Matilda Joslyn Gage Foundation
PO Box 192, Fayetteville, NY 13066

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