



Matilda Joslyn Gage Unit

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Spring 2010

I wanted to introduce my 4th grade students to local famous New Yorker Matilda Joslyn Gage. The Social Studies focus for 4th grade is New York State, so Gage is an ideal connection. Gage's fascinating life gives 4th graders the opportunity to be exposed to important strands of New York State history that were also Gage's life's work:

- Local History
- The Underground Railroad
- Women's Rights
- Native Americans (Haudenosaunee)
- Religious Freedom
- Local Author of *The Wizard of Oz*, Frank L. Baum

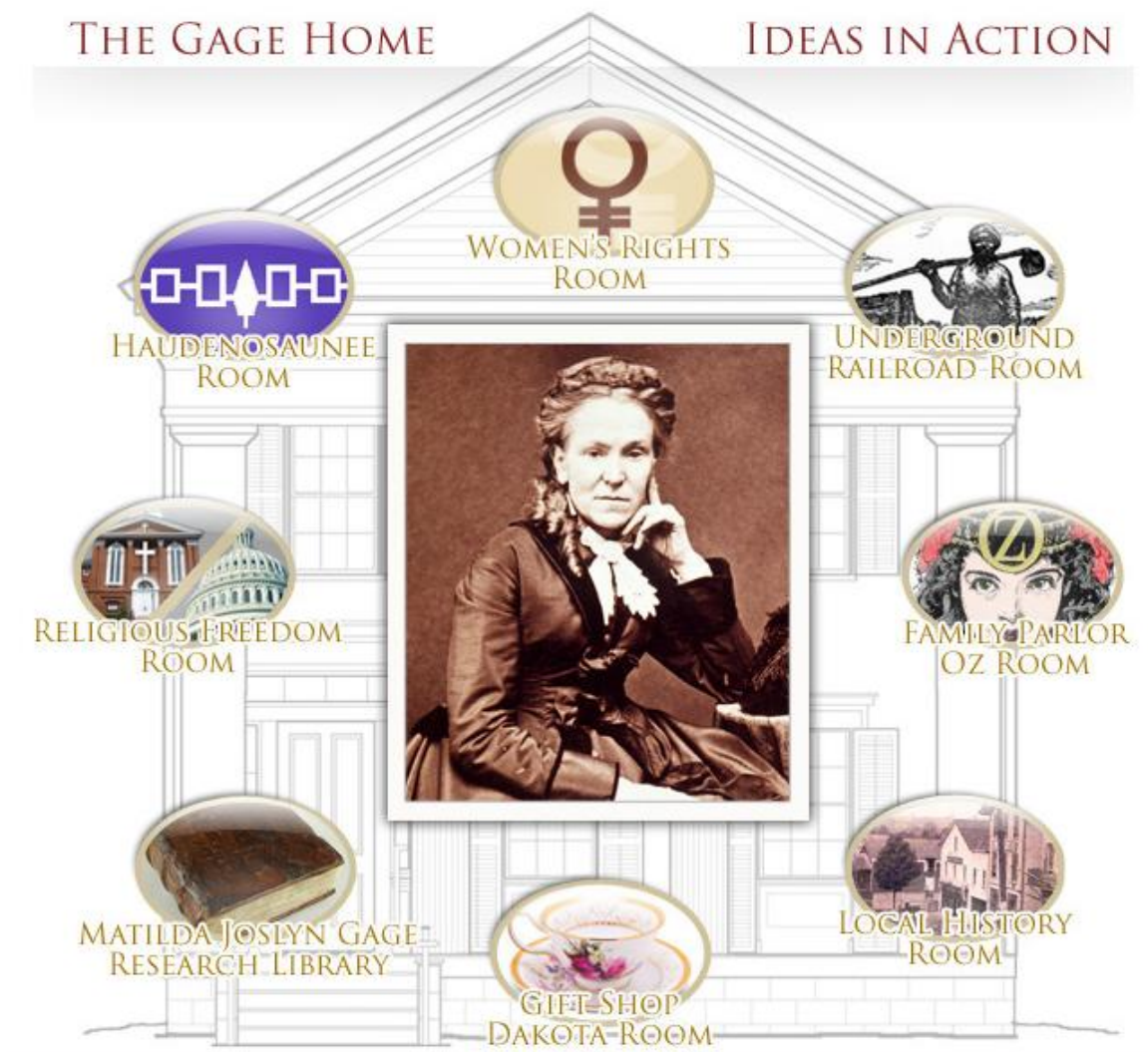
I live in Fayetteville, NY, where Gage lived for many years. Her home is being beautifully restored by the Gage Foundation. I wanted to share my enthusiasm for this "famous New Yorker" that has local as well as national significance. I was interested in the fact that each room in Gage's home is dedicated to one of these "life's work" passions of Gage.

I introduced the 4th graders to Gage by sharing online information from Wikipedia as well as the Gage Foundation website. Then I showed the students the rooms in the Gage home that each reflect one element of Gage's life's work.

I then divided the 4th graders into groups and gave them this packet of information, scissors and glue. The students were asked to read each paragraph about Gage, then cut out the room icon that is represented by the paragraph and paste it under the paragraph. The students enjoyed this activity and it got us talking about important words and concepts like suffragette, defying the law, oppression and separation of church and state. The culminating activity for all the 4th graders was a visit from Mrs. Gage by Renee-Noelle Felice. It was very well received.

Matilda Joslyn Gage

(1826-1898)



Rooms in the Gage Home



Matilda J. Gage - 4th Grade Activity Page

Paste corresponding room icon from separate sheet below each paragraph:

While Gage believed that all freedom struggles were connected, woman's rights became the core of her life's work. She entered the movement, as did Susan B. Anthony, at a national woman's rights convention held in Syracuse in 1852, four years after the first (1848) regional convention in Seneca Falls. Her speech at the 1852 convention was her first in public life. Gage, along with Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, was a founding member of the National Woman Suffrage Association. From 1878 to 1881 she published the *National Citizen and Ballot Box*, NWSA's official newspaper, from her home in Fayetteville.

Fayetteville's Gage House was offered as a station on the Underground Railroad. The Matilda Joslyn Gage Home, which is on the New York State Underground Railroad Heritage Trail, was accepted for inclusion in the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom in 2004. One of the proudest acts of my life; one that I look back upon with most satisfaction is that when Rev. Mr. Loguen [*Syracuse conductor of the Underground Railroad*] ...went to the village of my residence to ascertain the names of those upon whom run-away slaves might depend for aid and comfort on the way to Canada, I was one of the two solitary persons who gave him their names. Myself and one gentleman of Fayetteville, were the only two persons who dared thus publicly defy 'the law' of the land, and for humanity's sake rendered ourselves liable to fine and imprisonment in the county jail, for the crime of feeding the hungry, giving shelter to the oppressed, and helping the black slaves on to freedom.

"I received the name of Ka-ron-ien-ha-wi, or 'Sky Carrier,' or as Mrs. Converse said the Senecas would express it, 'She who holds the sky.'" This is the way Matilda Joslyn Gage described her adoption into the Wolf Clan of the Mohawk Nation in 1893. Her Mohawk sister "said this name would admit me to the Council of Matrons, where a vote would be taken, as to my having a voice in the Chieftainship," Gage wrote. How amazing this must have been to a woman who, that same year went on trial for voting in a local school board election. Considered for full voting rights in her adopted nation, she was arrested in her own nation for voting.

Matilda Joslyn Gage was the mother-in-law of L. Frank Baum, author of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. It was she who suggested he write his delightful children's stories for publication. Gage also was his intellectual mentor, providing Baum with the social-reform vision that became the blueprint for his utopian world of Oz. Frank Baum loved his wife, Maud Gage Baum. It was as simple as that. The family delighted in recounting the story of their first meeting. Maud's roommate at Cornell, Josie Baum, was anxious that Maud meet her handsome cousin Frank.

During a time in which a woman's virtue and worth were often tied to the strength of her (Protestant) Christian faith, Gage spoke and wrote openly of her beliefs in the separation of church and state, and of her support of alternative spiritualities and realities such as those found among the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois), the Theosophists, and pre-Christian civilizations.

Fayetteville is a village located in Onondaga County, New York, United States. As of the 2000 U.S. Census, the village had a population of 4,190. The village is named after Lafayette, a national hero of both France and the United States. It is part of the Syracuse Metropolitan Statistical Area. The Village of Fayetteville is located in the Town of Manlius, east of the City of Syracuse of which it is a suburb.