

# WOMEN'S HISTORY AND RESOURCE CENTER

## ADVANCEMENT PLAN

2024-2026 GFWC CLUB MANUAL

### WHRC: EDUCATE, ENGAGE, AND EMPOWER

#### 2024-2026 Emphasis:

- To educate members and others about GFWC's history and impact and the historical contributions of others.
- To engage community leaders and citizens in projects and programs that document GFWC and local history, restore and preserve historic buildings and artifacts, and that honor and celebrate GFWC, individual, and community achievements.
- To empower GFWC and community members in collaborative efforts to create a better future.

Since the Federation's founding in 1890, GFWC members have understood the historic significance of the organization's mission to improve communities through volunteer service. To preserve and better document GFWC history and member's work on local, state, national, and international levels, the Women's History and Resource Center of the General Federation of Women's Clubs officially opened at GFWC Headquarters in Washington, DC, on May 1, 1984.

Regardless of the focus of a community service project, it may benefit from a historical perspective. The WHRC strives to educate and inspire GFWC members and potential members, the research community, and the public to explore the rich, historical role of women volunteers through GFWC's expansive collections.

The WHRC offers access to readily available reference services, an online research catalog, educational programs and publications, creative exhibits, and dynamic partnerships to all those interested in using its resources. Benefits of membership made possible through the WHRC include preservation of historic records, buildings, and artifacts; and creative ways to use GFWC's history for community outreach.

GFWC's history is full of examples of successful projects that demonstrate the important relationship between grassroots and international efforts, the significance of long-range planning and thoughtful organization, and the value of community service in developing strong and compassionate leaders.

The *GFWC Women's History and Resource Center Advancement Guide* encourages every club to investigate and document its own history by learning about GFWC's past. Use the guide to explore and share GFWC's amazing history while documenting your own!



**GFWC**  
est. 1890  
GENERAL FEDERATION  
OF WOMEN'S CLUBS

#### 2024-2026

#### WOMEN'S HISTORY AND RESOURCE CENTER COMMITTEE

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## FEATURED PROJECTS



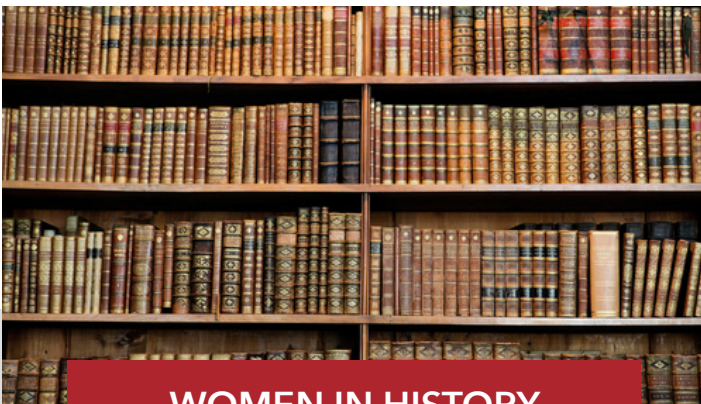
### VETERAN FLAG PROJECT

The GFWC Barbourville Junior Woman's Study Club (KY) has flags made with images of servicemembers and women from their town. The flags are on display throughout the town. The project honors veterans from the past and those who are still serving. It is an "honorable" display to all who served. The community is proud of this Woman's Club project.



### BLACK HISTORY MONTH

GFWC Grundy Woman's Club (VA) celebrated Black History Month with a quiz on famous Black women. Maya Angelou is the first African American woman to have her picture on a commemorative quarter; Ketanji Brown Jackson became the first Black female on the U.S. Supreme Court; and Winsome Earle-Sears became the first Black GFWC Virginia Lt. Governor of GFWC Virginia. The club also studied eight of U.S. history's most famous female doctors.



### WOMEN IN HISTORY

GFWC Woman's Club of Caldwell (NJ) members found a unique way of learning about women in history. The chairman heard the U.S. Mint had initiated the American Women's Quarters Program. The thirty-eight club members were asked to participate in a "treasure hunt," collecting as many new quarters as possible. Biographies of the women were researched, a learning experience, as many of the historical women had been unknown to most members. The club will donate children's editions of the biographies to the local library.



### GRAVESITE CARE

Four members of the GFWC Woman's Club of Olympia (WA) visited the gravesite of Abby Howard Hunt Stuart, founding member of the GFWC Woman's Club of Olympia in 1884. Abby died in 1902 in San Francisco, where she was caring for her aunt. Her body was brought back to Olympia for burial. Members of the club met the train. Clubwomen visiting her gravesite scrubbed the stone and cleaned the site, pledging to continue that project in her memory.

## OVERVIEW OF GFWC COLLECTIONS

The GFWC Women's History and Resource Center manages the organizational archives of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, related special collections, and a complementary research library. Our Archives document GFWC's historical development from 1890 to the present, including the role of GFWC clubwomen in promoting education, leadership, and social and political advocacy in the broad programmatic areas of art and literature, conservation, personal and public education, public and international affairs, and home and community life. GFWC members encompass some of the most prominent women of their respective eras, including Julia Ward Howe, Jane Addams, Julia Lathrop, Alice Lakey, Mary Belle King Sherman, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Margaret Chase Smith.

GFWC programs have included advocacy for women's suffrage, child labor and juvenile court laws, community and family health reform, the establishment of national parks, the preservation of Native American culture, peacetime uses of technology, libraries and literacy, wartime service, the Equal Rights Amendment, and international humanitarian efforts.

Special Collections held by the WHRC include State Federation and club histories, oral histories, photographs, and art and artifacts. GFWC's most significant "artifact" is its Washington, DC Headquarters, which was designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1991.

GFWC's Research Library consists of nearly 5,000 publications that provide a broad context for researching the history of GFWC and women volunteers. The GFWC Collections Management Policy, which defines how GFWC collections are acquired, managed, and preserved, can be found at [www.GFWC.org/what-we-do/WHRC](http://www.GFWC.org/what-we-do/WHRC).

### HOW DOES THE WOMEN'S HISTORY AND RESOURCE CENTER SUPPORT MY CLUB?

- WHRC can help you preserve your club's archives, record the oral history of longtime members, and write an engaging historical narrative. The WHRC has prepared two guidelines to help you with these projects: A Guide for Recording Oral History and A Guide for Preserving and Writing Club History. Email [WHRC@GFWC.org](mailto:WHRC@GFWC.org) or call 202-683-2028 for a free copy of these publications.
- The WHRC can help you develop programs using GFWC history to promote interest and membership. (Refer to "Suggested GFWC History Projects" below.)
- The WHRC helps manage the preservation of GFWC's National Landmark Headquarters building.
- The WHRC can help you navigate catalog and online exhibits and provide advice to clubs and State Federations on how to make their own collections accessible online. The WHRC uses the latest technology to make collections available to GFWC members throughout the world. Visit [www.GFWC.org/what-we-do/WHRC](http://www.GFWC.org/what-we-do/WHRC).
- GFWC publishes the WHRC Blog, a monthly publication available on [GFWC.org](http://GFWC.org) to provide insight on GFWC's history and historic preservation.
- With an approved appointment, GFWC offers complimentary tours highlighting exhibits at GFWC Headquarters for groups and individuals.
- The WHRC provides research opportunities for members and the public.

### HOW CAN MY CLUB SUPPORT THE WORK OF THE WOMEN'S HISTORY AND RESOURCE CENTER?

- Support the WHRC financially with a donation through the GFWC Annual Giving Program specified for WHRC or with the purchase of the WHRC Book Pin from the GFWC Marketplace ([www.gfwc.allegiaromeoville.com/product/WHRC-40th-PIN](http://www.gfwc.allegiaromeoville.com/product/WHRC-40th-PIN)). WHRC funds are used to purchase preservation supplies, collections management technology, books/reference materials for the WHRC research library, support preservation work, and community outreach



efforts. During the 2024-2026 Administration, funds donated to WHRC can also be designated for the restoration and preservation of GFWC art and artifacts. In addition to many important paintings and art prints, the collection includes numerous ceramics, a variety of textiles, documents, and other objects. Some of these artifacts are in urgent need of conservation.

- Become an onsite volunteer. The WHRC needs help to make the thousands of club histories and hundreds of oral history transcripts accessible online. Onsite volunteers may work as GFWC Headquarters tour guides or under the guidance of WHRC staff.
- Help make the WHRC an internationally recognizable resource on the historical role of women volunteers by promoting WHRC collections, services, and student field study opportunities to local colleges, universities, and historical institutions.
- Participate in events that feature WHRC services and benefits, such as tutorials and workshops, as well as the Women's History Month event held each year in March at GFWC Headquarters.
- Encourage the appointment of a WHRC Chairman in State Federations and clubs.
- Keep the WHRC updated on the location of club and State Federation archives.
- Report your WHRC program activities to GFWC. We want to share your success stories to inspire others.

## PROJECT IDEAS

Develop and incorporate club and community projects aimed at preserving and promoting women's history. Educate club and community members on the current relevance of GFWC and club histories. Develop diverse and creative projects to encourage active member participation.

- Honor GFWC Past State Presidents and Directors of Junior Clubs and/or Club Presidents by creating a profile of each leader, including their photograph if one is available, to preserve in their respective State or club archives.
- Write your club history and update it annually or biannually (once an administration) by recording significant projects, achievements, and community impacts. Request a free copy of A Guide for Preserving and Writing Club History by contacting the WHRC at WHRC@GFWC.org or 202-683-2028.
- Create a brief "Club History Bullet" to submit with newspaper articles and other communications to educate the community about your club and its impact. Example: Chartered in 1963, the St. Andrews Woman's Club has benefited the local community with thousands of hours of volunteer service, especially through efforts that support education and the wellbeing of women and children.
- Celebrate significant club anniversaries with a display at a local library or other public space that highlights the club's community projects.
- Invite members to take turns each month giving a report on a well-known woman in history or one currently making history.
- Prepare a visual display or PowerPoint video of past and present members, major service projects, and historical artifacts to be used at membership orientations and displayed at club fundraisers and events.
- Choose a member each month who will be celebrating her birthday. Interview her and prepare a presentation for your meeting. Also highlight a member from the past or an event from the past.
- Educate the public about your history by inviting history teachers and students to visit your club. Share scrapbooks from early days and club histories.
- Observe Women's History Month in March with a community event. Consider one that honors a community leader who exhibits outstanding service and exemplifies the qualities set forth in Mary Stewart's Collect for Clubwomen, or perhaps one that celebrates several women, such as an educator, a community servant (fireman, policeman), a business leader, and a volunteer.

**SUGGESTED GFWC HISTORY PROJECTS**

- Contact the WHRC for tips on using WHRC publications and electronic resources for club program ideas. Use the booklet *Rising by Light to Higher Things: Highlights of GFWC's Collections* to create programs on GFWC's support of American Art; the GFWC Timeline to relate GFWC national service programs to local ones; or GFWC photographs of events, people, or unique publications and memorabilia to illustrate a PowerPoint presentation.
- Contact the WHRC to receive a scripted PowerPoint presentation that provides an historical and interior tour of 1734 N Street.
- Highlight your club's history to demonstrate the importance of your club to your community. For more information on membership recruitment activities, review the GFWC Membership section in the *GFWC Club Manual*.
- Gain inspiration for fundraising and community outreach by reviewing past GFWC Community Improvement Program Award winners in the WHRC online catalog. GFWC history is relevant to ALL program areas.
- Develop a proactive public awareness program by offering GFWC history stories to your local news media for Women's History Month (March), Federation Day (April 24), and Archives Month (October).
- Partner with local historical institutions to promote the role of your club in local history.
- Work with your local public schools to assist students with National History Day projects on women's history; offer to serve as judges for local History Day competitions.

**WHRC PIN & TOTE BAG**

The WHRC was founded in 1984, and GFWC is celebrating its 40th anniversary with the launch of a special logo that features books, a gavel, Jennie June's silhouette, and even Mildred "Madame Hawkins" Ahlgren's trademark glasses. Show your support for the WHRC by purchasing a magnet-back enamel pin with this delightful design! Proceeds from the purchase of 40th anniversary-branded merchandise will help fund the WHRC's mission to preserve and make accessible GFWC's long and important history.

**HOW CAN I OR MY CLUB ARRANGE A TOUR OR SCHEDULE A RESEARCH VISIT?**

A National Historic Landmark, 1734 N Street NW, is a Washington must-see for GFWC members and their guests. The WHRC manages access to GFWC's historic archives and collections, including tours of GFWC Headquarters. Tours and research appointments must be scheduled in advance by emailing [WHRC@GFWC.org](mailto:WHRC@GFWC.org) or calling the WHRC Librarian at 202-683-2028.

Tour and research hours are between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. GFWC is closed on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veterans Day, the Wednesday-Friday of Thanksgiving week, and the week between Christmas and New Year's Day. Tour admission is free for GFWC members and by a suggested contribution for non-members.

**GUIDE TO USING THE WHRC ONLINE CATALOGS**

A primary goal of the WHRC is to make GFWC's valuable historical records more accessible to our members, the scholarly research community, and the public. Improved access will promote greater recognition for the contributions of GFWC clubwomen and inspire members to use the lessons of past successes to build solid membership, strong leadership, and meaningful community service projects. The WHRC online catalogs allow GFWC members and website visitors, including those who come to the catalog via a general web search engine such as Google, to explore a wide range of GFWC collections. The tips in this Guide are meant to be a quick outline to navigating the WHRC online catalogs. For additional guidance, please do not hesitate to email [WHRC@GFWC.org](mailto:WHRC@GFWC.org) or call the WHRC Librarian at 202-683-2028.

To access the catalog through the GFWC website:

1. Go to [www.gfwc.org/research/](http://www.gfwc.org/research/)
2. For photographs, objects, and archival material, click the link for the PastPerfect Web Edition Public Access site. For our reference library, including our state federation and local club history collection, click the link for the TinyCat Library catalog.

### NAVIGATING THE ONLINE CATALOGS

#### PastPerfect Web Edition Public Access Site

**KEYWORD SEARCH** - This search field casts the widest net for information, like the simple keyword search feature of Google. The search covers all fields included in the catalog records, including donors, who may be individuals, clubs, or State Federations. As with Google, enclosing a multi-word search term in quotation marks will limit results to that phrase; for example, "South Dakota."

Interactive features in each record:

- Email Page (top, right)—send this image to a friend.
- Send Feedback (top, far right)—contact the WHRC with comments or questions.
- Order Image (below image)—request a copy for a club presentation or publication.
- Search Term (in record)—may provide additional information on that topic. For example, click on "GFWC Headquarters" to read details on the history of GFWC Headquarters.
- Person (not shown)—Click on the name of any GFWC International Past President to see her biography.
- Related Hyperlinks (not shown)—If digital content is available, a link will be provided to read a book, club or state history, or oral history online.

#### TinyCat Library Catalog

**SEARCH FOR... box** - Type a keyword, author, or title into the "Search for..." box on the landing page. From the search results page, or from the individual record, click the "Ask About this Item" button to send a message to the WHRC Librarian requesting more information or access. (As we are a non-circulating library, we are unable to accept "place hold" requests, but staff will be happy to help provide access to selected works to the fullest extent possible.)

