WOMEN'S HISTORY AND RESOURCE CENTER

ADVANCEMENT PLAN

2026-2028 GFWC CLUB MANUAL

GFWC est. 1890 GENERAL FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S CLUBS

"WOMEN'S HISTORY IS WOMEN'S RIGHT . . . . AN ESSENTIAL, INDISPENSABLE, HERITAGE FROM WHICH WE CAN DRAW PRIDE, COMFORT, COURAGE, AND LONG-RANGE VISION." — DR. GERDA LERNER

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. The Women's History and Resource Center (WHRC) of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, officially opened at GFWC Headquarters in Washington, DC, on May 1, 1984. The WHRC was designed to preserve and better document GFWC history and members' work on club, state, national, and international levels, and to promote and document volunteerism.

Regardless of the focus of a community service project, it can 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, online research catalogs, educational programs and publications, creative exhibits, and dynamic partnerships to all those interested in using its resources. Benefits of GFWC membership made possible through the WHRC include preservation of historic records, buildings, and artifacts, as well as 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 WHRC makes these historical projects accessible to club members looking for inspiration.

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

2026-2028 WOMEN'S HISTORY AND RESOURCE CENTER COMMITTEE

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2026-2028 UNITY PROJECT

"HER"STORIES SHAPE OUR FUTURE

Observe Women's History Month in March by collaborating with your local library, museum, school, and/or other civic organizations to sponsor an event. Consider one that honors a community leader or club past and/or present members who exhibit outstanding service and exemplify the qualities set forth in Mary Stewart's Collect for Clubwomen. Perhaps you could organize one that celebrates several women, such as an educator, a community servant (firefighter, librarian), a business leader, and a volunteer. Utilize print and social media throughout the month to promote your project.

COLLECT FOR CLUBWOMEN

Keep us, Oh God, from pettiness; let us be large in thought, in word, in deed.

Let us be done with fault-finding and leave off self-seeking.

May we put away all pretense and meet each other face to face, without self-pity and without prejudice.

May we never be hasty in judgement and always generous.

Let us take time for all things; make us to grow calm, serene, gentle.

Teach us to put into action our better impulses, straightforward and unafraid.

Grant that we may realize it is the little things that create differences, that in the big things of life we are at one.

And may we strive to touch and to know the great common human heart of us all,

and, Oh Lord God, let us forget not

to be kind.

Mary Stewart | April 1904

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FEATURED PROJECTS

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE NATIONAL MONUMENT PROJECT

The Fuquay-Varina Woman's Club (NC) has established a committee, "HERSTORY TEAM, It's Monumental!" to inform members and others about the Women's Suffrage National Monument Foundation and to encourage support of the construction of a women's suffrage monument in celebration of the semi-quincentennial. The committee has planned several educational sessions, including a public forum for the community, and is making plans to visit Washington, DC, to see the completed Suffrage Monument.

GFWC TRAIL BLAZERS

The GFWC Woman's Club of Bridgeport (WV) created a Women's History Month program honoring six famous notable GFWC trailblazers, including Eleanor Roosevelt, Pearl S. Buck, and GFWC International Past Presidents Mary Katherine Miller and Maxine Scarbro. Members were asked to bring a guest to the club's March meeting, which was such a success that the skit was also performed at the GFWC WV District Spring Workshop and the GFWC WV Summer Conference.

WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY

Members of the GFWC Glendale Woman's Club (AZ) held their first Women's Equality Day with information provided by the National Women's History Alliance. A NWHA presentation was shared at a luncheon, and NWHA magazines were distributed as parting gifts along with bookmarks celebrating women's history. Members invited friends and family, and the occasion was advertised in print and online to ensure a successful event.

THE HEART OF THE HOME

The Women's Club of Pittsford (NY) funded an interactive flat panel (IFP) as an educational tool for the Ontario County Historical Society's Open Hearth Kitchen, a 1914 interpretation of an early nineteenth century kitchen in an established household. The panel offers a dynamic and engaging learning experience, combining the functionality of a whiteboard, projector, and computer into a touch-enabled screen, which helps teachers and others access and share information that promotes collaborative learning.

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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. The collections encompass our long-time broad programmatic areas of art and literature, conservation, personal and public education, national 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/District of Columbia Federation and club histories, oral histories, photographs, artwork, and artifacts. GFWC's most significant "artifact" is its historic Washington, DC Headquarters, which was designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1991.

GFWC's Research Library consists of over 5,000 publications and manuscripts that provide a broad context for researching the history of GFWC and women volunteers.

The WHRC collections are governed by a Collections Management Policy, which defines how the collections are acquired, maintained, and preserved. The WHRC collections encompass GFWC's institutional archives, including convention records, files related to our programs and leadership, and *Clubwoman Magazine* (and its predecessors). We hold a robust photograph and audio-visual collection, as well as GFWC ephemera, memorabilia, and the art and artifacts that furnish our historic Headquarters building. We also maintain a reference library collection focused on women's history, the women's club movement, and the history of volunteerism. (Note that while we do have many federation- and club-level archival and photographic materials, we do not maintain official records for State/District of Columbia Federations, or local clubs, or for outside organizations.)

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

The WHRC can help you preserve your club's archives, plan an oral history project to record the stories 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 or call 202-683-2028 for a free copy of these publications, or download them from the Digital Library on the Member Portal.

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 historic Headquarters buildings, an important part of GFWC operations and impact, and offers tours and on-site research appointments.
- The WHRC can help you navigate the historic collections, and provide advice to clubs and State/District of Columbia Federations on how to make their own collections accessible to researchers. The WHRC uses the latest technology to make collections available to GFWC members throughout the world. Visit https://www.gfwc.org/research/ to learn more.
- The WHRC shares historical information through GFWC.org, the WHRC blog, *Clubwoman Magazine*, and on social media. These stories assist clubs in identifying historical connections in their own clubs and communities, and provide suggestions for research and exhibits.

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- The WHRC provides research opportunities for GFWC members and the public through both on-site visits and long-distance research assistance. Contact the WHRC at WHRC@GFWC.org or 202-638-2028.

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

- Encourage the appointment of a WHRC Chairman in State/District of Columbia Federations and clubs.
- 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 and tote bag from the GFWC Marketplace. gfwc.allegranaperville.com/category/WHRC
- WHRC funds are used to purchase preservation supplies, collections management technology, and books/reference materials for the WHRC research library, and to support preservation work and community outreach efforts.
- Purchase the Silver Ironworks Necklace in support of the GFWC Headquarters Façade Project.
- Purchase items from the Wishlist on Amazon or at local book retailers.
- Support the restoration and preservation of GFWC artifacts through the GFWC Annual Giving Program specified for the Women's History and Resource Center Fund. Funds may also be used for purchasing additional resources as needed.

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.

- 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. nhd.org
- Honor GFWC leaders including past or present officers, chairmen, State/DC Federation Presidents, and/or Club Presidents by creating a profile of each leader, including their photograph if one is available, to preserve in their respective archives. Utilize GFWC's *A Guide for Recording Oral History*.
- Write your club history and update it annually or biannually (once an administration) by recording significant projects, achievements, and community impacts. Don't forget to submit your history to the WHRC Club History collection! Download a free copy of *A Guide for Preserving and Writing Club History* from the Digital Library on the Member Portal.
- 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 well-being 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. Or utilize your club newsletter to feature notable women corresponding with a national monthly observance (i.e., National Book Month in October) feature a female author).
- Prepare a table-top display board 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.

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- Educate the public about your club history and GFWC by inviting history teachers and students to a club meeting or event. Share scrapbooks from early days and club histories.
- Partner with local historical societies, museums, and cemetery preservation organizations to research, preserve, and share the stories of women in your community.
- Support GFWC's partnership with the Women's Suffrage National Monument Foundation's efforts to build a monument on the Mall in Washington, DC dedicated to prominent women in American history, www.womensmonument.org. Watch the WSNMF's informational video at a club meeting or share the link with club members.
- To educate members on the women's suffrage movement watch "Iron Jawed Angels," a 2004 movie that focuses on the American women's suffrage movement during the 1910s and follows women's suffrage leaders Alice Paul and Lucy Burns as they use peaceful and effective nonviolent strategies, tactics, and dialogues to revolutionize the American feminist movement to grant women the right to vote.
- Encourage members to register U.S. servicewomen on the Military Women's Memorial National Register. Create profiles for female veterans to preserve their memory and legacy of service.
- Engage our members, clubs, and communities in commemorating the 250th anniversary of our country, america250.org. In recognition of the U.S. Semiquincentennial, sponsor a writing or poster contest at a local school highlighting women who played a significant role in our nation's independence.

SUGGESTED GFWC HISTORY PROJECTS

- Contact the WHRC for tips on using WHRC historical resources for club program ideas. A scripted PowerPoint presentation is available for download from the Digital Library on the Member Portal that provides a 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 Advancement Guide 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.

WHRC PIN & TOTE BAG

The WHRC was founded in 1984, and GFWC celebrated 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 or tote bag 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.

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

A National Historic Landmark, A National Historic Landmark, GFWC's Headquarters at 1734 N Street, NW is a Washington, DC 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, calling the WHRC Librarian at 202-683-2028, or use the online request form https://www.gfwc.org/tour-requests.

Scheduled 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 or call the WHRC Librarian at 202-683-2028.

To access the catalog through the GFWC website:

1. Go to 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 State/DC 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/DC 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 to a Friend button (top right): send the record to someone else.
- Send us Feedback button (top right): email the WHRC with new information, a question, or a request to use the image.
- People and Search Terms: clicking on a blue (hyperlink) name or phrase in these fields will bring you to other associated records.
- If the record includes a photo, click on it to see a larger version and to access the Image Request Form button, which will email the WHRC with your request.

TinyCat Library Catalog

SEARCH FOR... – 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.

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AWARDS

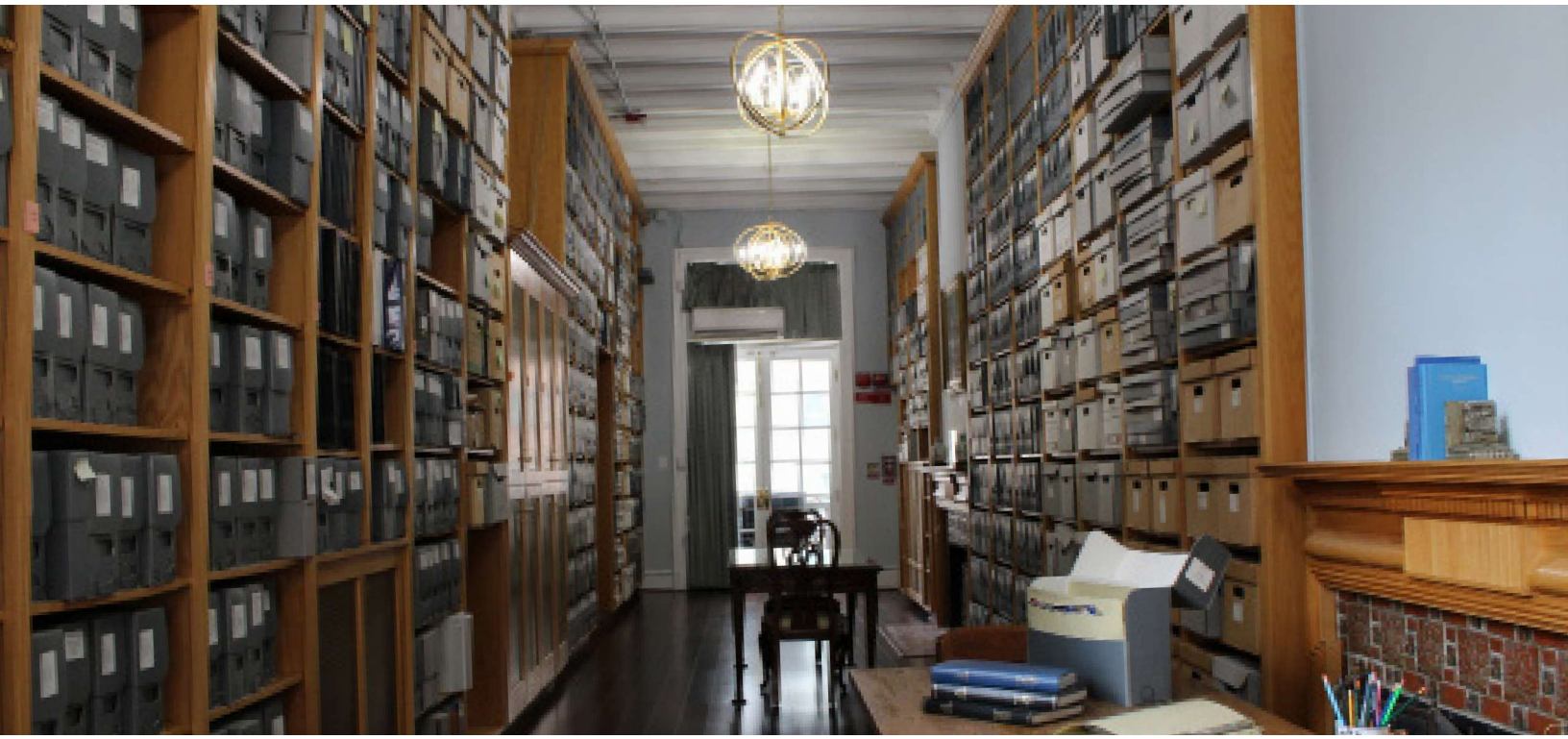
GFWC recognizes State/District of Columbia Federation for outstanding projects and clubs for creative projects in implementing effective Women's History and Research Center projects, as follows:

- **Certificate to one State/District of Columbia Federation in each membership category**
- **$50 award to one club in the nation for project creativity**

Award winners will be determined by entries into the Award Program. Each State Federation and the District of Columbia Federation may submit one State/District of Columbia Federation Award Entry and one Club Creativity Award Entry for the Women's History and Research Center Advancement Plan. **Entries should be submitted to the State/District of Columbia Federation Women's History and Research Center Chairman.** Forms are accessible to the State/District of Columbia Federation Presidents in the Member Portal.

Note: Clubs do not submit entries directly to GFWC or GFWC Chairmen.

Refer to the Deadlines for GFWC Awards and Contests sections of the Club Manual for more information.



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