



Conversations

The Newsletter of the Margaret Fuller Society

Volume 4, Issue 1

Spring 2022

Fuller Society Committee for Racial Justice: The Conversation Continues

*Charlene Avallone, Immediate Past President, with
other committee members*

Background:

The Margaret Fuller Society's Initiative on the Movement for Racial Justice

As the annual meeting of the Society's Executive Council—conducted online in May of the pandemic year 2020—was winding down, the murder of George Floyd caused our discussion to take a turn. We asked ourselves how the Margaret Fuller Society might best contribute to the movement for racial justice. Among other ideas for keeping the conversation going, we hoped to devote a regular newsletter feature to issues around race, to encourage sharing teaching materials through various media, and to make our conference panels more responsive to matters of racial justice and more proactive in engaging scholars of color.

As the pandemic intensified and dragged on, however, the newsletter fell victim and ceased publication, teaching became more fraught, and virtual conferencing made networking more challenging. Still, the Society can claim advances in two areas: President Sonia Di Loreto appointed members of a Society Committee for Racial Justice, and First Vice President Jana Argersinger has led the Committee in shaping topics and calls for Society-sponsored conference panels and has reached out to organizations and individuals to expand the racial diversity of presenters.

In addition to Sonia and Jana, the Committee originally included Society officers Mollie Barnes, Christina

Katopodis, Eagan Dean, Andrew Wildermuth, and my-

self. Recently Patricia Frick and Etta Madden have volunteered to serve, as well. Here the members speak briefly of their work and interests, then Sonia and I address teaching Fuller and race, past and future. I end with an appeal to our members.

Jana Argersinger

If you attended the Fuller Society's panels at SSAWW 2021 (on proto-feminism, "frontier" writing, and race) and at MLA 2022 (on transcendentalism and race), you saw strong examples of one Committee for Racial Justice strategy in action: using the sessions we regularly sponsor at conferences as a vital zone of outreach and academic activism, of interaction with people, concepts, and life experiences beyond the society's more accustomed ambit. In my dual role as a member of the new committee and as the MFS vice president charged with seeing those sessions to fruition, I have been thrilled to collaborate with a cadre of idea-filled colleagues. Together, we are opening this zone to urgent matters of racial justice, both by actively recruiting contemporary scholars of color and by foregrounding research on writers, intellectuals, and activists of color—all in some degree of conversation with concerns relevant to Margaret Fuller.

Along this road, we are seeking to build community with such groups as the [Anna Julia Cooper Society](#), [MELUS](#) (Society for the Study of the Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States), and the [African American Literature and Culture Society](#). There are many lessons to learn, I have found, about doing this work with respectfulness and to good effect, the imperative of humility foremost among them.

Elsewhere in this issue, look for details of our upcoming ALA and MLA panels: We are honored to feature presentations on such topics as the editorial and activist contributions of [Mary Ann Shadd Cary](#); the perils of travel for

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Conversations

The Newsletter of
The Margaret Fuller Society

www.margaretfullersociety.org

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Column Editor: Nanette Hilton

Conversations is published digitally twice yearly. Society membership includes a newsletter subscription. Current and past issues are available on the Society's website.

Please consider writing for us! We welcome short articles and essays on topics related to Fuller: news, scholarly pieces, book reviews, and personal and non-academic essays. See this and prior issues for inspiration. Send submissions and queries via email to Jessica Lipnack at jessicalipnack@gmail.com with "MFS newsletter" in the subject line.

Margaret Fuller Society

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Michael Barnett, *Public Commemoration*

Letter from the Editor

Dear Fullerenes,

"The work is done through all, if not by every one." So wrote our dear Margaret Fuller in *Summer on the Lakes, in 1843*. She could have been describing this new edition of *Conversations*, which arises from our long hibernation and reflects the work of many. Some twenty-five people's thumbprints are on this issue as writers, collaborators, editors, and designers—along with the legacy of Katie Kornacki's fine work (thank you) in producing this newsletter time and again.



Indian Ocean, Leeuwin Naturaliste Park, Western Australia

We cover a lot of ground here:

- The work of the Committee for Racial Justice, led by Charlene Avallone, which is expanding our understanding of what it means to commit to achieving a more just world;
- Society members' efforts—in the persons of Phyllis Cole and Megan Marshall—to pay homage to (and preserve the meaning of) Margaret's last home in Massachusetts;
- John Buehrens's exposition of Timothy Fuller's determination to bring the evils of slavery to the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives and later to the Massachusetts legislature;
- Nanette Hilton's compilation of "good news" about our members' publications and presentations;
- Mario Bannoni's essay on the parallels between the Russian attack on Ukraine and the siege of Rome in 1849;
- Lisa West's reviews of two new Fuller-related books; and,
- A stunning set of tributes to three scholars who've died since the publication of our last newsletter and whose work has been so critical to many of us: Charles Capper, Bell Chevigny, and Joel Myerson.

Letter from the President

Dear Fuller Friends,

After the hiatus caused by the COVID-19 global pandemic, we are delighted to present you with a new issue of our newsletter, *Conversations*. The pandemic has affected our lives in a multitude of ways, and, after all this time, I would like to “meet” you—on paper, at least—by sharing John Plumbe’s 1846 daguerreotype of Margaret Fuller, held by the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery.



I bring attention to this specific image—which, I am sure, we all know in its minutiae—because I think that during these past pandemic months we all felt isolated, oftentimes reading on our own, and, perhaps, holding our heads like Margaret does in this image—in order to keep our attention focused, or in bewilderment at the state of the world. But as we were insulated, at times quarantined, and maybe even feeling sequestered, our lives were interspersed with moments of presenting our public faces, even dressing our hair in preparation for a Zoom conference, or to see friends virtually. In a way, we have been like Fuller here: comprising a weird mixture of poised introspection, and constant attention to the public eye. After the many problems we’ve faced—and that we still continue to contend with—both in our private lives, and as a global collectivity, I wish to look at the Fuller daguerreotype. This image can inspire us in

That’s a lot of material in addition to the work of the Society itself, which also appears here, including the line-up of presentations at ALA, MLA, and the Thoreau Society Gathering, not to mention a description of the new Fuller archive at the Walden Woods Project’s Thoreau Institute Library, along with a complete listing of the archive’s categories to which we all are invited to contribute.

As many know, this is my first issue as editor of *Conversations*. What an honor. Margaret has been “my person” for nearly fifty years—and what this society makes real is that she is also many other people’s “person.” That she can extract this level of energy from so many people more than two hundred years after her birth speaks to the power of the single individual but, as she implies above, little is possible unless we work together. That certainly has been true of this newsletter. Sonia has been my co-sea captain, encouraging and advising me, a non-scholar and a relative newcomer to the Society (a decade or so). Thank you, *sorella italiana*. Andrew Wildermuth made

an offhand remark about wanting to help. Next we knew, he was copyediting, if not line editing, every piece in a flash. *Danke* (NB: he’s living in Germany), Andrew, for your energy and professionalism. Nanette Hilton did the hard work of gathering up our members’ news for which we all are grateful. Mollie Barnes has worked



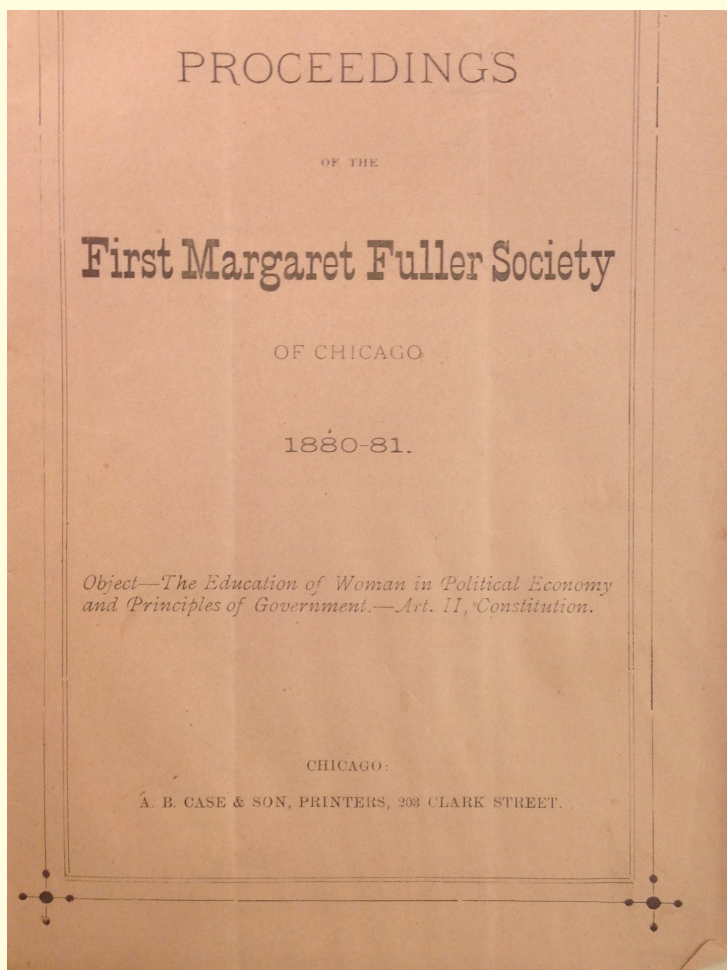
her magic again in making our words look beautiful. And I’m so appreciative of the kindness of women who began as strangers and are now friends: Charlene Avallone and Jana Argersinger, who advised and encouraged me from the beginning until this very last day of newsletter preparation. I am so thankful that you trusted me to do this.

Jessica
Editor, *Conversations*

Above: our editor researching regenerative agriculture on an ATV at Blythe Calnan’s Runnymede Farm, Uduc, Western Australia

our own society to build on this combination of closeness and community, of intimacy and the outward projection that Margaret's stance embodies so profoundly. As we move forward, I hope that we can leave the comfort of our intellectual locations and scholarship to travel (albeit speculatively) to lesser-known places, to meet new communities, and to hear other voices, like Fuller herself did, after she sat for this daguerreotype in 1846, when she journeyed to Europe as "the means of needed development."

If you are longing for meeting once again in person, please notice all the opportunities in the upcoming months (ALA, The Thoreau Society Annual Gathering, MLA) for in-person events, where, I am sure, many of us will be able to benefit from the informal and extemporaneous closeness that only in-person gatherings ensure.



In the past two years, we certainly have had fewer opportunities to meet in person, but despite this absence we took advantage of new opportunities, by seeing each other on screens, and continuing our conversations through the listserv or in virtual conferences. As you will find in the pages of this newsletter, many events related to Margaret Fuller were fostered by individual members or groups within our society, and in different locations. Not only did our Advisory Board become more transatlantic

(welcome, Andrew!), but new projects have also been built up to consider Fuller in international and global settings. In particular, I want to bring attention to Italian high-school students' reading Margaret Fuller's *Summer on the Lakes, in 1843*, as part of "Italy Reads," a community-based English language reading and cultural exchange program, hosted by the John Cabot University in Rome.

In our effort to build community, and to provide practical help to early-career scholars, non-tenure track faculty, independent scholars, and international scholars, we seek to create a pedagogy forum. As you know, the MFS has always emphasized pedagogy and teaching (see some of the Society's panels, the pedagogy section on the Society's website, some material shared through the listserv, and the "pedagogy" category in the Fuller Archive at the Thoreau Institute), and we seek to continue enriching and promoting this aspect of Fuller studies. Tentatively called "The Pedagogy Initiative," the purpose of our renewed effort is to help strengthen our teaching experience and to share our methodologies, expertise, lesson plans, suggestions, and questions in a collegial and friendly environment. If you are interested, and think you can devote some of your time to this project, the Society will certainly welcome your ideas in regard to creating a communal space. I will coordinate our collective efforts in order to create resources for teaching Margaret Fuller in our times and places, with a sustained commitment to equity, inclusion, and diversity.

Flipping through the pages of this newsletter you will find information about initiatives past and present, memories of precious members of our community, "good news," reflections, and reviews. I am honored to express my gratitude to all those who enthusiastically contributed. You will also read about our "Committee for Racial Justice," and for this I would like to thank Immediate Past President Charlene Avallone, and all other members who have joined, in appreciation of their constant vigilance in planning anti-racist teaching, panels, and events. This newsletter reflects our vibrant community, and I hope that it will foster networks of scholars and Fuller *exaltados* (and *exaltados*) in generating exciting projects, while also supporting one another and affirming our fellowship.

My appreciation and thanks to all the friends (and "sisters") in the MFS who have been working on creating such an encouraging and important vision for producing and circulating knowledge about Margaret Fuller. I look forward to hearing more ideas, projects, and responses.

Sonia
President, Margaret Fuller Society

The Conversation on Racial Justice Continues

(cont. from page 1)

nineteenth-century Black women organizers; the diary of [Frances \(Frank\) Rollin \(Whipper\)](#); the “affect of exile” in W.E.B. Du Bois’s [The Souls of Black Folk](#); and transcendence from [the Colored Conventions Movement](#) of the 1800s to the [Harlem Renaissance](#) of the 1920s and 1930s.

Mollie Barnes

I’m honored to be part of the Committee and part of a Society committed to anti-racist work, even and especially when that means challenging and then rewriting the limitations of our author. I value what I’ve learned from other Committee members about how to construct inclusive calls for papers and panels—and the impact that has on what we read, teach, and talk about. At my home institution, I’ve served as co-chair of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee for several years. Despite the fact that our university’s mission includes serving underserved families and communities in our region, we do not have an office dedicated to this work. This omission demonstrates that need and calls for advocating for the establishment of that office, which has been my priority. Our projects have included organizing mentoring events for first-year, first-generation students targeted at helping them find “brave spaces” on campus—offices and networks where students feel safe to find friends and mentors. In February 2022, we also hosted our university’s first celebration of Douglass Day. In my writing life, I’ve turned my focus to my new book project, which studies the ways women reformers in the lowcountry documented one another’s work in letters, newspaper articles, and memoirs—and the ways white women’s reformist projects for Black communities often undermined and even erased Black women’s work.

Christina Katopodis

While serving on the committee, I’ve had the pleasure of collaborating with colleagues on a CFP for the MLA 2022 conference, and I presided on the roundtable which was the product of these efforts: “Mattering in the Nineteenth Century and Beyond: Transcendentalisms, Racism, and Repair in the United States.” Outside the Committee, I’ve coauthored a book on inclusive, equitable, student-centered teaching practices with Cathy N. Davidson, [The New College Classroom](#), forthcoming from Harvard University Press on August 30, 2022. The book is a practical guide for faculty and administrators focused on how to apply the antiracist theories of educators like bell hooks and

Paulo Freire, using the latest research on active learning methods, in the everyday practices we bring to our classrooms, departments, and offices. The book pushes for radical changes in higher education to structure equity into our lesson plans and into the academy.

Eagan Dean

I’ve been involved with MFS since 2019. After presenting on white cultural extractivism and feminism in *Summer on the Lakes* at MLA in 2021, I organized and chaired our 2021 SSAWW panel on a similar theme, which you can read more about [here](#).

When I was putting together an early version of the SSAWW CFP with Jana Argersinger’s expert guidance, I reached out to Black-led author societies for Black women authors. However, I wasn’t able to forge a successful collaborative panel in time. I learned a hard and valuable lesson: collaboration and the need for justice must be at the center of planning processes. I’ve taken that lesson to heart while planning new courses, and I recommend the work of ASU Professor [Asao Inoue](#) as an accessible starting place for planning anti-racist teaching, as well as the work of our own Christina Katopodis. At MFS, I have loved to see—and help with—more panels sponsored by MFS that ask difficult and complicated questions about race and history. I think MFS has done great work in modeling methods of critique around author societies’ admired central figures. I said before on the listserv, and I’ll say again, that white scholars in particular need to be willing to critique but not kill our darlings—to become educated about every white author’s/scholar’s/movement’s embeddedness in American systems of white supremacy, and translate that knowledge not simply into self-benefiting scholarship but into self-challenging activism. In the future, I’d love to see more ideas from members regarding the committee’s future actions, as we still face many challenges, including asking why the MFS is overwhelmingly white, and how this can be improved. Also, it’s important to ask, does an author society act in self-conscious [accompliceship](#)—proactive work beyond passive allyship—and use our privileges to challenge anti-blackness and racism within our profession?

Andrew Wildermuth

The 2020 Society-wide discussions of Fuller studies and race contributed to forming my dissertation-in-progress, a comparative project analyzing “malleability” in the American Renaissance and the Harlem Renaissance. In 2021, I published this project’s first article on the rad-

ical dimensions of sonnets and the poetics of weather in Claude McKay's *Harlem Shadows*. In Spring 2022, my second study in this project will be published, this time on fluidity and settler colonialism in Margaret Fuller's *Summer on the Lakes, in 1843*. In this article I introduce the term "Transcendental settlerism," which I understand as the settler-colonial dimensions of Transcendentalist texts that theorize a right of the white settler to "reform" the American continent. I believe colonial-critical readings are essential for better understanding Transcendentalist reform projects, as well as more broadly the intersections of theories of nature, nation, and race in the United States. I hope to take part in collectively building more avenues for such revisionist thinking in the MFS. I am, of course, glad to discuss any time with other members—and I thank you all for your work!

Patti Frick

My institution, Otterbein University, has been a part of the AAC&U's national initiative on Truth, Justice, and Racial Healing for several years now. As a professor of English, I have developed and taught courses that engage with race and cultural differences, including narratives of migration and exile. Within the past two years, I have focused my research on the depiction of indigenous peoples in women's travel writing of the nineteenth century, especially in [Maria Graham](#)'s travel journals of India, Brazil, and Chile. Last summer, I presented a paper on Graham's reading of race, class, and culture in India at the Fuller Society's joint meeting with ALA. I have also challenged students to explore issues of race, indigenous peoples, and justice in my advanced course on Latin American cinema in our Film Studies Program.

Etta Madden

The cover of [Engaging Italy: American Women's Utopian Visions and Transnational Networks](#) (SUNY Press 2022) features three privileged white women. None is Margaret Fuller, but she figures in the introduction as foundational. I riff on Fuller's three types of Americans abroad to describe the ways in which lesser-known women—Anne Hampton Brewster, [Caroline Crane Marsh](#), and Emily Bliss Gould—learned more about themselves and their privileges as they engaged with Italian culture in the period of Unification. Seen to be escaping conflict in the eras of the U.S. Civil War and Reconstruction, as they headed to Italy, these women revealed their racial prejudices even as they attempted to educate and elevate "Others." Brewster, a journalist and salonnière, was asked to introduce sculptor Edmonia Lewis, described as "the

coloured American Artist" to "some wealthy Americans" and "induce" them to order her work. Industrial school and orphanage founder Gould wrote of impoverished, illiterate Italian children as animals to be domesticated. Marsh, translator and activist wife of the U.S. ambassador, similarly asserted the need for discipline and education among the rural poor. Discussing these women, I emphasize privilege and racism as contributing to the limits of their desires to actualize utopian visions.

Charlene Avallone

I feel privileged to work with the members of this Committee toward institutional change. Over the years, I have also had the privilege to work with university programs mentoring students of color. My publications have treated white and Black writers in the antebellum tradition of historical fiction; of Melville, Elizabeth Elkins Sanders, and the debate over representation of indigenous Hawaiians; and, most pertinent to Fuller, of her appropriation of Native American gynocentric traditions that Paula Gunn Allen (Laguna Pueblo) identifies as the "red roots" of white feminism; and of Fuller, Anna Julia Cooper, and gender and racial exceptionalism in the American "Renaissance" critical tradition. In my chapter on antebellum women essayists for the *Cambridge History of the American Essay* (now with editors Jason Childs and Christy Wampole), I consider African American writers [Maria Stewart](#) and [Ann Plato](#), the (arguably) part-indigenous factory operative Betsey Chamberlain, and Fuller, among others.

Although I have been out of the classroom now for many years, aside from an occasional guest appearance, my experience there makes me believe it is one of the most important sites for work toward every form of social justice. I began focusing on issues of race in teaching Fuller in the late 1980s when, as intersectional critical approaches made their way into academic study, I reorganized my survey of literature of the United States to 1900 that I taught at Notre Dame around rubrics of race, class, gender, and aesthetics. This course, titled "Visions and Divisions," departed from Melville's mid-century observation that "the Declaration of Independence makes a difference" for freedom of imagination and expression to explore four broad themes: language strategies and structures that shape differences of vision and form; divisions of body and spirit (intellect, emotions, soul); divisions of work; and political and social distinctions, asking always what differences of gender, race or ethnicity, and social class impacted writers and speakers, texts, and oral genres. We read the Declaration of Inde-

pendence against excerpts from Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* on "the Indian," slavery, and manufacture; statements of common law theory of coverture; Fuller's "The Great Lawsuit"; the Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions; Sojourner Truth's challenge to the definition of "woman" as white and middle-class; and the Thirteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution; as well as texts considered "American literature." The framework worked to put canonical literature in dialogue with personal writings, indigenous oral culture, speeches and writing of African American women and men, and contextual materials, such as excerpts from medical writers, conduct books, anti-woman-suffrage texts, and factory workers' journalism.

The syllabus included "American Literature: Its Position in the Present Time, and Prospects for the Future," the essay Fuller wrote for the collection *Papers on Literature and Art* (1846), which made her international reputation as a critic. Although this essay incorporates material from Fuller's reviews of work by Emerson, Hawthorne, Brockden Brown, and Longfellow, and considers several other writers, Fuller insists here that a characteristically "American" literature had not emerged and could not emerge in the United States "until the fusion of races among us is more complete." Not until "this nation shall attain sufficient moral and intellectual dignity to prize moral and intellectual, no less highly than political freedom" could "national ideas" and "original forms" emerge that would constitute an American, distinct from an English, literature. What Fuller meant by "the fusion of races" challenged my students and speaks significantly to our contemporary concern for racial justice and cultural representation. "American Literature: Its Position in the Present Time, and Prospects for the Future" deserves more attention.

Sonia Di Loreto

With the creation of the Committee for Racial Justice, the MFS has taken a step forward in addressing questions of structural racism and injustice in academia and society at large. While this is only one aspect of what I hope will become a foundational practice, I think that we need to continue to formulate strategies for how to improve our teaching, our research, our dialogue, and our events in order to ensure that they are inclusive, ethically just, and antiracist. As a non-American Americanist "abroad," I practice a distant critical observation of the U.S., using a slanted perspective, both more unattached, and more global and interconnected. I am at liberty to design classes about what I believe constitutes American literature or

American studies, but I constantly feel the responsibility towards my students to remind them that our Mediterranean situatedness informs our thinking about racial issues, the creation of collectivities, and the practice of citizenship in our own times. While in my research I address a community of scholars that is both American and global, in my classes I don't have to consider American literature as "our" national literature: when the cumbersome possessive term is lifted from studies about literature, culture, and nation, interesting critical discussions can enrich the classroom's experience, and allow for truly transnational American and Black literatures.

In preparing for one of my Fall classes I have been planning a section of my class that includes some of Margaret Fuller's *Dispatches* (1847), a few of [Frances Ellen Watkins Harper's](#) poems (1853), and [Maaza Mengiste's](#) novel *The Shadow King* (2019).

Drawing from the superb and groundbreaking work advanced by Brigitte Fielder, Megan Marshall, Eric Gardner, Jane Bennet, Derrick Spires, Leslie Eckel, and Christina Katopodis, to name a few, I try to give my students critical tools and texts that will allow them to discuss concepts such as nationhood, belonging, inclusion, and citizenship by dwelling on sounds produced by the national soil, and voices uttered by literary figures. Focusing on sound and the utterance of language invites my students to think about the modes in which voices and sounds can be empowering and authoritative, and how, through their resonance and physical vibration, they can build communities and nations.

When we approach Fuller's "Dispatch 15," written after her travels in northern and central Italy in August 1847—where she states: "Who can ever be alone for a moment in Italy? Every stone has a voice, every grain of dust seems instinct with Spirit from the Past, every step recalls some line, some legend of long-neglected lore" (Dispatch 15, 140)—we ponder over the ecology of the nation, and its aural quality. By insisting on the aural aspect of the landscape, Fuller focuses on the language—human or natural—produced by that specific place, peculiar to it, and which one can hear upon entering that particular location. In the same article she describes the surroundings of the Lake of Como, evoking watery murmurs: "It was late at night and I was nearly asleep, when, roused by the sound of bubbling waters, I started up and asked, 'Is that the Adda?' and it was. So deep is the impression made by a simple natural recital, like that of Renzo's wanderings in the *Promessi Sposi*, that the memory of hearing the Adda in this way occurred to me at once, and the Adda seemed familiar as if I had been a native of this region"

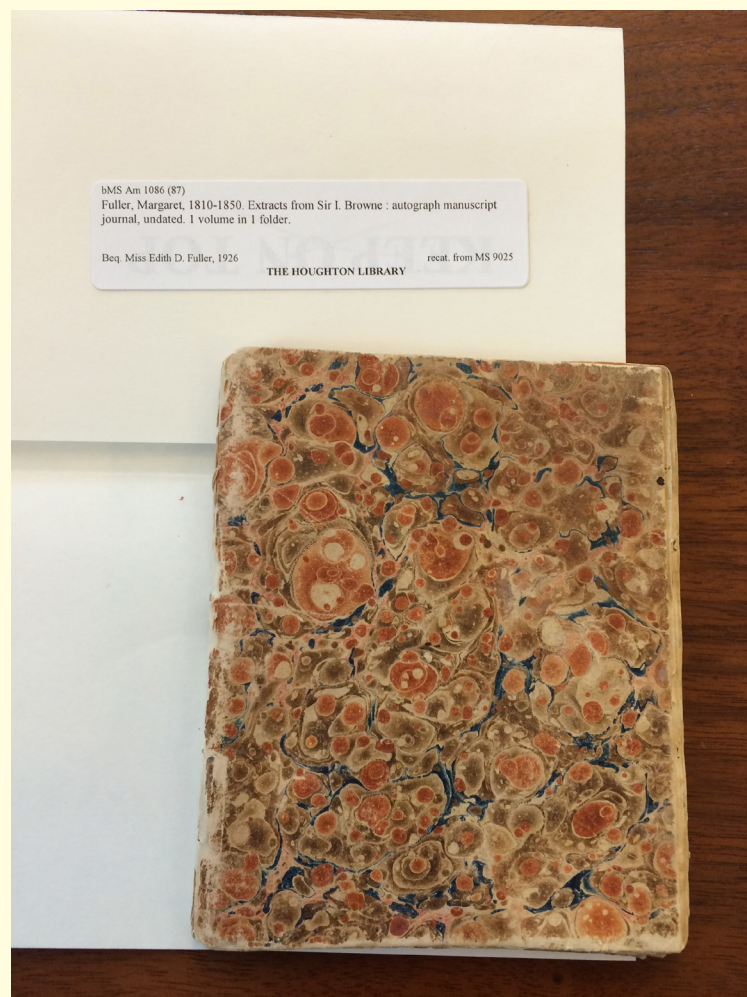
Journaling for Justice Update

Mollie Barnes, Second Vice President

I am happy to report that, after an unhappy pause between the spring of 2020 and the summer of 2021, the Fuller Society has resumed planning for our next international conference—**Journaling for Justice**—which I'm honored to direct.

The Conference Planning Committee has met several times during fall 2021 and spring 2022 in order 1) to discuss reasonable timelines and locations for the conference; 2) to discuss potential partnerships with other institutions, organizations, and author societies; and 3) to reach consensus about our broad-stroke hopes for what the conference will be—both in light of the pandemic and in light of the parallel work that this Society is doing on the Committee for Racial Justice.

We plan to release a call for papers later this summer with more information about our finalized location and date. For now, please mark your calendars for summer 2024! One of our most important priorities is to make this conference a point of convergence among academics, journalists, and people committed both to Fuller and to writing for Justice beyond the nineteenth century.



(Dispatch 15, 145). With the mediation of a literary work, the *Promessi Sposi*, and the literary character of Renzo, Fuller fantasizes about her becoming native by embracing the sound of the river, somehow acquiring that “jus soli” at the core of the concept of birthright citizenship.

The questions of affiliation and national inclusion are complicated when reading about other sounds on another river, in Frances Ellen Watkins Harper’s poem “Eliza Harris.” In this lyric, the speaking subject creates immediately a communal environment with the audience: “Like a fawn from the arrow, startled and wild, / A woman swept by us, bearing a child.” Once again the literariness of the character warrants a universal appeal and a shared knowledge, but it is that first “us” that creates the community of spectators who can witness the following scene on the river: “She was nearing the river—in reaching the brink / She heeded no danger, she paused not to think! / For she is a mother—her child is a slave— / And she’ll give him his freedom, or find him a grave!” As spectators, the audience can also partake of the ominous sounds produced in a country based on slavery: “How the depths of forest may echo around / With the shrieks of despair, and the bay of the hound?” In order to create a sense of interconnectedness and shared ontology that can result in an inclusive practice of citizenship, Harper utilizes both the mediation of Eliza Harris as a literary character and the sounds that prove unavoidable and all-encompassing, even for a white audience.

By concluding the module with Maaza Mengiste’s recent novel *The Shadow King*, set during the 1935 Italian invasion of Ethiopia, where the author magisterially includes a chorus as embedded audience and critique, we can continue to explore the sounds of racism and colonialism, and the multiple forms of violence against women. Focusing on a colonial conflict that Italy has been trying to silence can be beneficial to reflect on the active formation of publics, and the multiple interconnectedness of these stories. The lyrical language of the novel, in fact, functions as a connector to both Harper and Fuller, and helps in posing questions about who speaks, who listens, and who are those who refuse to hear.

Appeal to our members

The Committee for Racial Justice urges all MFS members to share ideas and materials on working with Margaret Fuller to the ends of racial justice. The Committee welcomes suggestions. The newsletter, as well as the listserv, is open to input from each of you. We look forward to hearing what you have to say!

Margaret Fuller Society Business Meeting Memo

Lisa West, *Financial and Membership Officer*

We held the first meeting of the newly incorporated Margaret Fuller Society Inc. on Zoom on December 12, 2021.

Present: Sonia Di Loreto, Elisabeth West, Jana Argersinger, Charlene Avallone, Mollie Barnes, Jessica Lipnack.

Agenda:

1. Update on incorporation process
2. Newsletter
3. Conference “Journaling for Justice”

Discussion:

- **Incorporation:** Elisabeth provided an update on the efforts for incorporation. The organization was incorporated as a nonprofit in the State of Massachusetts on 11/12/2021, under the name Margaret Fuller Society Inc. Elisabeth used Legal Zoom to help with the process. Peter Reilly is offering his address as the Massachusetts address. Initial officers are:

President: Sonia Di Loreto

Treasurer (Finance and Membership): Elisabeth West

Clerk or Communications Officer: Leslie Eckel

Directors/Officers: Sonia Di Loreto, Elisabeth West, Leslie Eckel, Jana Argersinger, Mollie Barnes, Charlene Avallone, and Andrew Wildermuth

Our fiscal year will end on the last day of the month of June. The Communications Officer, or Clerk, will file a postcard annually to the IRS to retain nonprofit status. Elisabeth will make sure the bank has updated records.

Now that we are incorporated, we have started planning more deliberately to grant awards to support scholarship on Fuller. Three proposed categories for awards of \$400 each, to be announced at the annual business meeting at the American Literature Association (ALA), were approved by the Board on January 12, 2021:

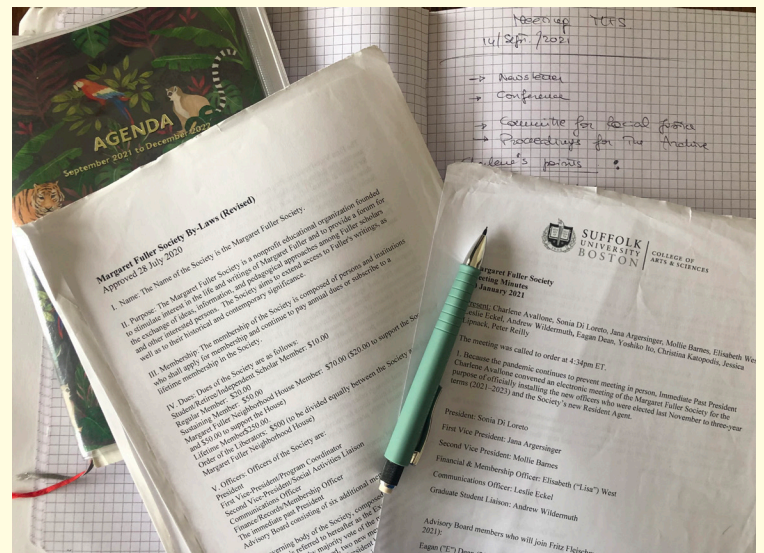
- Independent Scholar/Contingent Faculty Research Award—to encourage archival research
- Teaching Margaret Fuller Award—to encourage teaching about Fuller in an academic or public setting

- Graduate Student Presentation Award—to support a research presentation.

We discussed whether the awards should be retrospective or prospective, with preference toward the latter.

Action Items:

- Elisabeth needs to discuss pragmatic matters with the bank
 - We need to decide our plans for the awards, with the goal of stimulating work on Margaret Fuller
 - We need to develop a timeline
 - In addition to these awards, Jocelyn Riley is interested in setting up a memorial award or fund to honor Jeffrey Steele.
- **Newsletter:** The new editor of the newsletter will be Jessica Lipnack, with Mollie Barnes continuing as layout and design editor, Katie Kornacki sharing her past experience, and Nanette Hilton also participating in the ongoing efforts.
 - **Conference:** Mollie updated us on the Conference Committee discussions regarding the “Journaling for Justice” conference. We will need to decide on a place (Rome or USA) and date; COVID and travel restrictions suggest that 2023 might be difficult. The Committee will continue to work on planning.



Sonia's notes

Fuller Takes Her Place at Walden Woods Project's Thoreau Society Institute Library

Kathy Lawrence

Thanks to the good offices of Charlene Avallone, Immediate Past President of the Fuller Society, and Jeffrey S. Cramer, Curator of Collections at the Walden Woods Project's Thoreau Institute Library, Margaret [Fuller now has a presence at Walden](#). With his deep interest in Asian spiritual traditions, perhaps Thoreau would have called it “karmic,” for in addition to the historical and literary, there exists a strong symbolic link between the two figures. As writers of what one scholar has called “travelogues of independence”—Fuller's *Summer on the Lakes, in 1843* (1844) and Thoreau's *Walden* (1854)—they progressed to radical commitments for women's rights and abolition.¹ This fervor catapulted both into revolutionary action—Fuller's in 1848 in the fight for the Roman Republic, and Thoreau's with his public defense in Concord, Boston, and Worcester of John Brown's raid at Harper's Ferry.² The two avatars for social justice can now be studied together under the same auspices.

Fuller's biography on the Thoreau Institute's website represents a collaborative effort by several Fuller Society members, with a preliminary drafting by Charlene Avallone and Phyllis Cole, additional input from Noelle Baker and Briggs Bailey, and final approval from Megan Marshall. Jeffrey Cramer's intern Erin Monahan also deserves recognition for her industrious toil on this project. This biography presents no mere overview, but rather a pithy synopsis with relevance for our times: detailing not only Fuller's turning points and major written works, but also her political maturation. Curator Cramer links this evolution to Thoreau: “Thoreau always worked toward the betterment of humankind,” he explains. “When he wrote in *Walden* that he wanted to wake his neighbors up, that is exactly what he wanted to do in all his works. So the times Thoreau and Fuller lived in were times of economic concern, political unrest, and social inequality, and, sadly, our own moment can be described in the same way. Their struggles are our struggles; their solutions could be our solutions.”

Jeff Cramer is deeply passionate about Fuller and Thoreau, having immersed himself in their world beginning in his undergraduate days and having penned annotated editions of *Walden* (2004) and *The Maine Woods* (2009) for Yale University Press. He feels most proud of his 2007

work, *I to Myself: An Annotated Selection from the Journal of Henry David Thoreau*, as it attempts, as he describes it, “to present Thoreau as a human being, not an iconic figure, and to allow the reader to get to know ‘Henry’ rather than to study ‘Thoreau.’” Asked about forthcoming work, Jeff mentions his next project, *The Transcendental Circle: Social Reform, Human Rights, and the Foundations for Change in Our Time*. He is particularly excited about this project “because it will be giving all the Transcendentalists an equal footing and not be just another reinforcement of the Emerson-Thoreau patriarchy.”

Which brings us to this new inclusion of Fuller at Walden. Jeff envisions this nucleus of Fuller materials as the beginning of an expansion towards an inclusive archive of Thoreau's Transcendentalist colleagues: “Although our Thoreau Institute Library started as a very Thoreau-centric library, it has slowly expanded our collecting mission to anything regarding any of the Transcendental circle,” he explains. “Ideally, I'd like to expand our online projects, such as the Thoreau Log, to be more of a Transcendental Log—to see what any of the circle was doing on any given day and how the lives and writings of each of them intersect with the lives and writings of the others.”

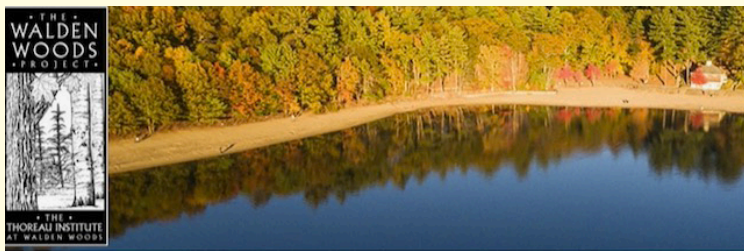
Charlene and Jeff are sending out an appeal to all of us. “We're so excited to have the Margaret Fuller Society Collections here, but we're creating this collection from scratch. We're working to have *every* work by and about Fuller here. Please help us build this collection so that students and scholars of Fuller will have a place where works by and about Fuller are all collected in one place,” Jeff implores. The papers of Society Founders Bell Gale Chevigny and Larry J. Reynolds will soon reside at the Institute, as will a full run of the first Society newsletter edited by Reynolds. Charlene Avallone, Kimberley Adams, Barry Andrews, and Michael Barnett have also donated papers, including publications, materials that document MFS history and public presence, and a sermon. The foundation of the MFS Collection is now around twenty-four blocks, as detailed in the list of Collection Categories in this issue of *Conversations*.

Jeff adds: “If you have something you've written or you've given a talk or presented a paper, please consider donating a copy.” Perhaps most important, Jeff suggests, “If you're retiring, please consider donating your papers and your personal research library. We're only just beginning, but if there are works that we don't have, please make suggestions or, if you're able, donate a copy. These collections are your collections. Please help make them what you want them to be.” Fullerenes must therefore heed

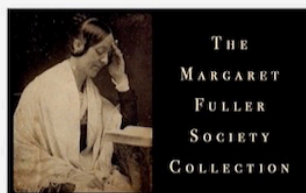
the call. Hard-copy submissions should be mailed to The Thoreau Institute Library, 44 Baker Farm Road, Lincoln, MA 01773-3004. Electronic submissions should be sent to Jeff's email: Jeff.Cramer@walden.org.

1. See Carmen Birkle, "Travelogues of Independence: Margaret Fuller and Henry David Thoreau," *Amerikastudien/ American Studies*, 2003, Vol. 48, No. 4 (2003), pp. 497–512.

2. Thoreau delivered his address "A Plea for Captain John Brown" first at Concord's Congregational Church in late October 1859, again on November 1st to crowd of 2500 at Boston's Tremont Temple, and finally on November 3rd in Worcester's Mechanics Hall. See Laura Dassow Walls, *Henry David Thoreau: A Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), pp. 446—56.



The Margaret Fuller Society Collection



MFS Archive Categories

1. History of Margaret Fuller societies (including membership and officers)
2. By-laws and revisions
3. Business—meetings, treasury, miscellaneous
4. MLA affiliation
5. Newsletters, Website, Listserv, and Wikipedia
6. Bicentennial 2010
7. The Margaret Fuller Society Collection at the Thoreau Institute

Scholarship

8. Bibliographies, miscellaneous conference papers and abstracts, lectures, sermons, articles

Conferences

9. MLA: panels, abstracts, papers

10. ALA: panels, abstracts, papers

11. SSAWW: panels, abstracts, papers

12. "Margaret Fuller and American Cultural Critique: Her Age and Legacy," New England American Studies Association, Boston, 29–30 April 1995

Society-sponsored Conferences:

13. "Transatlantic Women: Nineteenth-Century American Women Writers in Great Britain, Ireland, and Europe," with the Catharine Maria Sedgwick Society and the Harriet Beecher Stowe Society, Oxford University, July 2008

14. "Transatlantic Women II: Nineteenth-Century American Women Writers Abroad," Florence, June 2013

15. "Transcendentalist Intersections: Literature, Philosophy, Religion," Heidelberg, July 2018

16. "Journaling for Justice," upcoming

17. Pedagogy

18. Editions of Fuller's work:

Edinburgh University Press, *The Collected Works of Margaret Fuller*
Library of America

19. Margaret Fuller in public

20. Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House

21. The Phyllis Cole Award for Social Service

22. Interlock Media documentary film: "Margaret Fuller: Transatlantic Revolutionary"

23. Fuller in the news: miscellaneous clippings

24. Papers of Individuals:

Bell Gale Chevigny

Larry J. Reynolds, correspondence with Bell Chevigny and others

Fuller Society at ALA, MLA, And Thoreau Annual Gathering

Jana Argersinger, First Vice President

Traveling to the ALA conference in Chicago this month (May 2022)? To the MLA convention in San Francisco next January (2023)? Or to the Thoreau Gathering this summer (July 2022)? Please join us for the rich menu of MFS-sponsored conversations detailed below and watch the listserv as conference times approach for invitations to dinner.

American Literature Association sessions, May 2022

1. Margaret Fuller Society Dinner | May 27, 2022, 6:30 pm
Acanto Italian Restaurant (18 Michigan Avenue, Chicago)

2. Session 15-E | May 28, 2022, 10:00–11:20 am

Breaking the Editorial Ice: The Work of Women Editors

Chair: Jana Argersinger, Washington State University, Pullman

1. “Labor-Centered Data Creation: Mary Ann Shadd Cary and Fostering Black Community,” Demetra McBrayer, University of Delaware
2. “Printers’ Devil, Circulation Liar, and the Whole Shebang: Zoe Anderson Norris’s One-Woman Magazine, 1909–1914,” Eve Kahn, historian and journalist
3. “Stubbornness and Sustainability: Why Harriet Monroe’s *Poetry* Outlasted the Little Magazine Movement,” Windy Counsell Petrie, Azusa Pacific University
4. “The Uses of Great Women: *The Revolution* and the Canonization of Margaret Fuller,” Todd H. Richardson, Univ. of Texas, Permian Basin
5. Respondent, Susan Tomlinson, University of Massachusetts, Boston

3. Session 16-E | May 28, 2022, 11:30 am–12:50 pm

Making and Using Scholarly Editions of Women Writers

Chair: Mollie Barnes, University of South Carolina, Beaufort

1. “Her Great-Grandmother’s Diary: Editing the Diary of Frances (Frank) Rollin (Whipper),” Jennifer Putzi, The College of William & Mary
2. “Editing Margaret Fuller’s *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* for the Next Generation(s),” Leslie Eckel, Suffolk University
3. “Helen Deese and *Daughter of Boston*: Editing Caroline Healey Dall’s Diary,” Lydia Willsky-Ciollo, Fairfield University

4. Session 18-L | May 28, 2022, 2:30–3:50 pm

The Society’s annual business meeting will convene at 2:30 after a lunch break.

Modern Language Association session, January 2023

Conditions of Exile in the Nineteenth Century and Beyond

Chair: Jana Argersinger, Washington State University, Pullman

1. “Transcendence from the Colored Conventions to the Harlem Renaissance,” Marlas Yvonne Whitley, North Carolina State University
2. “Exile and the Perils of Travel: 19th-Century Black Women Organizers’ Fight for Dignity,” Sabrina Evans, Penn State
3. “Du Bois in Berlin, Du Bois in Atlanta: The Affect of Exile in *The Souls of Black Folk*,” Thomas Howard, Washington University in St. Louis
4. “Exile’s Persistence: Margaret Fuller and the Public Trauma Culture of Expat Paris,” Stephanie Peebles Tavera, Texas A&M University–Central Texas

Thoreau Society Annual Gathering: “The Global Thoreau,” July 2022

Session A | July 7, 2022, 4:00–5:30 pm

“Where in the World Is Margaret Fuller?”

Chair: Phyllis Cole

1. “The Opposing Political Passions and Common Womanly Positions of Margaret Fuller and Costanza Arconati Visconti on the Eve of the Italian Risorgimento,” Mario Bannoni, independent scholar
2. “Woman [and] Artist: Margaret Fuller on Bettine Brentano-von Arnim and Friendship,” Alice de Galzain, University of Edinburgh
3. “‘I Found Your Note Here Several Days Since’: Margaret Fuller and Postal Delivery from Europe,” Cheryl Weaver, University at Buffalo
4. “Margaret Fuller in China,” Julia X. Du, Brandeis University

Fuller Society to Participate In Joel Myerson Annual Lecture Series

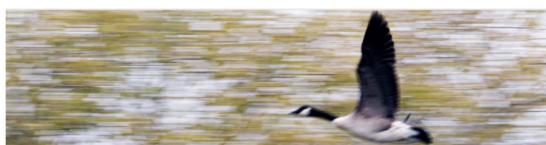
Lisa West, Financial and Membership Officer

The Joel Myerson Annual Lecture Series is an initiative honoring Myerson’s contributions to the field of nineteenth-century U.S. literature, as well as his commitments to public-oriented scholarship and lifelong learning. Noelle Baker has been leading monthly planning meetings with Anke Voss, curator of the William Monroe Special Collections of the Concord Free Public Library in Concord, Massachusetts, and representatives from the Association for Documentary Editing (ADE), the Louisa May Alcott Society, the Margaret Fuller Society, the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society, and the Thoreau Society. Current plans include an annual public lecture in late April at the Concord Free Public Library, with the possibility of an academic symposium in conjunction with the lecture. The annual event will include an exhibit complementing the lecture that features some of the Concord Free Public Library’s wealth of archival material. The planning committee is also considering a short-term fellowship engaging the lecture topic or related issues. Myerson advanced Fuller scholarship in a variety of ways, and the tributes from the Fuller Society demonstrate how much he is valued by our membership for his generosity to other scholars and students, his accessible and far-reaching scholarship, and his productive and multi-faceted career. This lecture series will be a way to honor his legacy and to continue to advance his interests, as well as to provide a venue for the participating societies to work together. Societies will rotate selecting a speaker and organizing the central event. The Concord Free Public Library will lead fundraising efforts and serve as a central institution.

2022 Annual Gathering of the Thoreau Society

Date: Wednesday, July 6, 2022 - 6:00am to Sunday, July 10, 2022 - 9:00pm

Location: Concord, Massachusetts



The 81st Annual Gathering of The Thoreau Society

July 6-10, 2022

The Global Thoreau

Features

Preserving Fuller's House At 8 Ellery Street: An Update

Phyllis Cole, Past President

A year and a half ago, as Megan Marshall wrote to the Society listserv, Fuller's last home in Massachusetts—8 Ellery Street, in Cambridge—was on the market, setting in motion a lively conversation among members about how we would love to make it our own. All we lacked was \$3,000,000: the asking price for a well-preserved 1841 Greek Revival house with an unusually large garden, adjacent to Mass Ave., and three blocks from Harvard Yard! John Buehrens began to inquire into the possibility of finding a Harvard-affiliated buyer. Though his idea never materialized, John opened the door to further conversation with the Cambridge Historical Commission. At least, as I proposed, the place needed a marker recognizing Fuller's time and accomplishments there, and, toward that end, we should certainly try to be in touch with its eventual buyer.



The story of 8 Ellery Street is still unfolding, but it is time for a report. In brief, the house now promises an eminent future, and, with the owner's approval, it has been nominated for the National Register of Historic Places. Furthermore, the Fuller Society has had a supportive voice in this development.

Later in the fall of 2020, Robert Purdy, a Boston-area real estate developer and contractor, purchased the property. Together with architect Kelly Boucher, he proposed both preservation of the original building and its expansion to include four rental units in a new "carriage house" behind it, taking up a substantial portion of the garden. This plan was entirely permissible according to the open zoning of the property: on the edge of a residential block, but adjacent to commercial Mass Ave. There were challenges raised, however, by both neighbors and preservationists. In December of that year, Megan heard from Allison Crosbie, Preservation Administrator of the Cambridge Historical Commission, that there would be a hearing to assess these plans by the board of the Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District. This board, Megan learned, could advise developers and mount resistance, if not actively prohibit an owner's legal prerogative.

Megan made the case in writing for the house's great historic significance, quickly assembling a letter and collecting twenty-three signatures in time for the hearing on

January 4, 2021. A major resource was her friend Jay Wickersham, an architect, historian, and lawyer, who both signed the letter and offered advice. I assisted by combing records for Fuller's sense of the place, while also investigating the recent work of a second writer who had more recently lived at 8 Ellery.

For over forty years, the poet David Ferry, who received the 2012 National Book Award in Poetry for his book *Bewilderment: New Poems and Translations*, had resided there, culminating a long career in 2015 with his poetry collection *Ellery Street*. This part of the project meant a great deal to me, because I was not only in touch with Ferry—my onetime faculty colleague at Wellesley College—but in the 1970s had more than once

been invited to the house by David and his wife, Anne, for dinner parties. Megan and I decided to broaden the letter to evoke the historic presence of both Fuller and Ferry at this address, and Megan used her wide web of acquaintance to draw in signers with both kinds of connection:

not only Fuller Society members Charlene Avallone, Sonia Di Loreto, Jana Argersinger, and John Buehrens, but also writers, bookstore owners, and library curators who presently live and work in Cambridge.

At the Zoom-conveyed hearing, which both Megan and I attended, Megan read her pre-circulated letter, which was joined by statements from nearby property owners, often more strongly oppositional than ours. The new “carriage house” was expected to rise as much as five feet taller than the original house, dwarfing it and filling up a great deal of the green space cherished by neighbors on both Ellery and Dana Streets. Though the owner and architect promised to preserve the interior, we all asked what sort of room design and materials would go into its new version. Nor were neighbors at all oblivious to the importance of the two authors who had lived in the house. Many had known Ferry personally, and our letter added to their knowledge of Fuller. As the Commission’s chair concluded, this was an “extremely sensitive project,” and the meeting ended with a “continuance” so that the owner and architect could respond to the objections raised.

At the second Neighborhood Conservation District meeting, on February 1, 2021, there was a much more favorable discussion of the design ideas newly generated by Purdy and Boucher: a much smaller carriage house with just two units, not taller than the front house, leaving more of the garden and all of its trees intact, while preserving all interior spaces and stairs in the front house. The only significant change would be a new kitchen. The neighbors and the Fuller Society agreed that this was the best deal possible within the structures of zoning law; and Purdy and Boucher not only consented to, but actively endorsed the idea of a plaque in front of the house declaring its historic significance. It was understood that the preferred form for such designation would be its inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. But that required an arduous and time-consuming process, and we knew that another Cambridge address, Fuller’s birth home at 71 Cherry Street, already holds that honor. Could there be a second house of Fuller’s in the National Register? Only weeks later did we find out from Alison Crosbie that the Cambridge Historical Commission had indeed applied for such a designation, and they in turn asked us questions about Fuller’s life there.

Throughout this process, all parties have worked in an amicable way that has allowed us to stay in touch. So now in spring 2022, I’m able to supplement Megan’s recent photos of the construction with architect Kelly Boucher’s own report on expectations for finishing the project. The

back building is complete, work on the interior and landscaping are underway, and owner Robert Purdy declares that all interested people are welcome to meet and view the site at the end of May. I’ve asked to be notified when that event is imminent! Meanwhile, Allison Crosbie tells us that the National Register application moves slowly but is still under active consideration.

Perhaps Megan’s description of Fuller and Ferry, excerpted from her letter, will be of interest to readers of *Conversations* for its combination of familiar facts with some new details and angles, as well as the pitch it makes. Here is her basic account:

First, we wish Purdy and Boucher to understand the exceptional literary history of 8 Ellery [...]. The pioneering feminist author and activist Margaret Fuller may have been the first person to rent rooms at the newly constructed 8 Ellery in 1842–1844, while she led her famous Boston “Conversations for women” and wrote articles and a book to support her youngest brother, Richard, a Harvard student, and their widowed mother. All three boarded together in the house. Ironically, 8 Ellery stood on the extensive grounds of the Dana Mansion, lost to fire in 1839, which the Fuller family had owned and occupied in better times. From her light-filled, second-floor room at 8 Ellery, Fuller looked out on the same view of the Charles River and the Blue Hills she’d enjoyed as a teenager. She recognized the house lot as a portion of the old mansion-house’s orchard and treasured the blossoming apple tree outside her window [...].

While in residence, Fuller wrote her justly famous essay “The Great Lawsuit: Man vs. Men, Woman vs. Women,” a culmination of years of thinking and discussion with members of the Transcendentalist movement about gender roles and woman’s place in history and contemporary life. “Let all arbitrary barriers be set aside,” Fuller wrote in the essay, which she later expanded to book length as *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*. Both essay and book served as lightning rods for the cause of women’s rights, inspiring the leading suffragists of the century ahead. It would not be wrong to identify 8 Ellery Street as a first stop on the way to Seneca Falls and the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment.

Fuller’s essay was published in *The Dial* in July 1843, under the editorship of Ralph Waldo Emer-

son, who is known to have visited Fuller at



8 Ellery at least once, along with others of the Transcendentalist circle. That same summer, Fuller traveled to the Midwest, gathering material for a book which she would research on her return to Cambridge as the first woman to be granted borrower's privileges and a reader's desk in Harvard's College Library—a first that stood for the rest of the century. From 8 Ellery Street, she walked to the Harvard campus each day until she'd completed the book, *Summer on the Lakes, in 1843*, a work that broke ground for its original combination of travel writing and advocacy for the environment and Indians' rights.

When Fuller left 8 Ellery in September 1844, it was to move to New York City, where she became the front-page columnist for the *New-York Tribune*, a newspaper with wide national circulation, whose editor, Horace Greeley, had traveled to Cambridge to seal the deal with Fuller at 8 Ellery. The house on Ellery Street was Fuller's last residence in New

England, the place where she established her standing as a leading thinker and writer, and the launching pad for her brilliant career as journalist, which culminated in several years in Europe as America's first female foreign correspondent, before her tragic death by drowning in 1850, at age 40, on her return voyage to the U.S.

Over one hundred years later, the poet and Wellesley College professor David Ferry, also known for his translations of *Gilgamesh* and *The Aeneid*, moved into 8 Ellery with his wife, the distinguished literary scholar Anne Ferry, occupying the house for nearly half a century, from 1960 to 2007. While in residence, Ferry, who won the National Book Award in 2012 for *Bewilderment*, published four volumes of poetry and four works of literary translation.

In 2015, Ferry published his most recent book of poems, *Ellery Street*, recalling his residence at 8 Ellery and evoking the spirit of the neighbor-

hood in a manner reminiscent of Fuller’s appreciation of the house as refuge and muse. The book was re-issued in 2020 and celebrated by an overflow crowd at the Grolier Bookshop in January. A photograph of the house is featured on the cover of the book, which the critic Mark Schorr describes as a “meditation on living in a place for a long time [...]. [T]he poems in the collection become the rooms in the house and the areas surrounding the house.”

Having described Fuller and Ferry, Megan’s letter goes on to ask for attention to the house’s interior, especially “details of the second-floor bedrooms Margaret Fuller’s family occupied and the staircase she would have used, as well as the first-floor rooms in which Ralph Waldo Emerson paid his call, and David Ferry maintained his library.” She also asked that the owner work with the Cambridge Historical Commission to secure a historical marker with the dates of Fuller’s residence there, and possibly Ferry’s as well, noting that the Margaret Fuller Society stood ready to aid in this effort. And she made a plea to “consider, in their landscaping, the special place of the garden and trees at 8 Ellery—a sacred literary space to both Fuller and Ferry.”

Megan’s letter ends with lines from Ferry’s poem “In the Garden” from *Ellery Street*, where he sits reading on a bench, admiring the flowering impatiens by the bird-bath, until these trees and bushes “all suddenly had the same idea, / of motion and quiet sound and the changing light, / a subtle, brilliant, and a shadowy idea.” Margaret Fuller would surely have understood that sensation and idea.

The January 2021 letter seems an important venture into public advocacy. But I want to conclude with a few additional thoughts about Fuller that we learned in the process of creating it, both before and after the actual hearing. Megan naturally emphasized Emerson’s presence as a visitor, his fame adding to the house’s cultural capital, but our point of view also includes Fuller’s resistance to Emerson in this choice of address. Soon after the move to Cambridge, she wrote to him that she could not be his neighbor in Concord: near him, she observed, “I [...] do not live enough in myself.” Instead, she wrote for the *Dial* from Cambridge and invited him to visit the place that was her own. And her doors were open to others, as well. Already at the time of this letter to Emerson, she had entertained Sam Ward and William Channing; soon she would offer space to sister Ellen and husband, Ellery Channing, as well as arrange the room next to her own as a place for Caroline Sturgis to visit and paint.

Soon Bronson Alcott and Charles Lane would come by to discuss their plans for Fruitlands.

Fuller’s house on Ellery Street in Cambridge was not only her final home in New England, but an essentially urban base for her part in the Transcendentalist movement. From there she went once a week into Boston for her Conversations at Elizabeth Peabody’s bookshop, as well as two or more times for concerts and meetings with friends. The mindset that produced “The Great Lawsuit” was made possible in such a setting, where, as she wrote, she found less time for reading since “contemporary spirits call to us in crowds.”

In the end she commented that, with brother Richard’s graduation from Harvard, she would be glad to get away from the college bell and its “clang.” But that shows how close she had been for two years, within walking distance of its library and larger scene. Her house and garden on Ellery Street were a green place away from the world—but very much involved with it, as well. We have already found Margaret Fuller in Cambridge at her birth home on Cherry Street and her memorial at Mount Auburn Cemetery: now we can more fully recognize, halfway between the two, this vital center for her work.



Timothy Fuller as an Anti-Slavery Proponent in Congress

John Buehrens

Apropos of the Society's work on racial justice, John Buehrens writes about the anti-slavery position of Margaret Fuller's father, Timothy, who served in the U.S. House of Representatives during two key votes related to slavery.

In an MFS listserv post connected to a book she was reviewing, Megan Marshall queried a citation about Timothy Fuller's anti-slavery stance as a congressman from W. O. Blake's book *A History of Slavery and the Slave Trade, Ancient and Modern* (Columbus: H. Miller, 1860). Since the Blake book was unknown to me, but of interest, I obtained a copy. It is a tome of some 865 pages, with a lengthy section seemingly drawn directly from the records of debates in U.S. Congress. There he quotes Timothy Fuller.

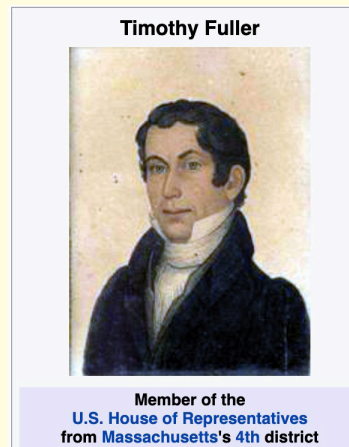
In the 1817–18 congressional session, there was an attempt to strengthen the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793. “Strong, Fuller, and Whitman, of Massachusetts, Williams, of Connecticut, Livermore, of New Hampshire, and several Pennsylvania representatives warmly opposed this bill,” Blake writes. After several amendments, the bill passed the House of Representatives, 84–69, with some Northerners voting in favor “for the sake of union and harmony” with the South. It also passed the Senate, 17–13, after an amendment provided that the fugitive's identity would have to be established by testimony of someone other than the claimant. When the bill returned to the House, Fuller and other opponents succeeded in tabling the entire matter.

When the Missouri Territory applied for statehood in the 1818–19 session and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole to debate the issue, Fuller spoke at length. His remarks cover almost five full pages in Blake (452–56). His argument against admitting Missouri as a slave state has several striking aspects. First, he argues that, although the Framers may have allowed some states to retain slavery as a necessity for forming a federal union, the Constitution puts the admission of new states entirely within the discretion of Congress. Second, the Constitution explicitly requires that new states have a constitution that guarantees “a republican form of government” (Art. 4, sec. 4). Congressman Tallmadge of New York had submitted an amendment prohibiting slavery in Missouri. Fuller argued that this was entirely proper: Congress had, for example, required certain modifica-

tions to the constitution of Louisiana before admitting that state. He then said this:

“The existence of slavery in any state is, so far, a departure from republican principles. The Declaration of Independence, penned by the illustrious statesman then, and at this time, a citizen of a state which admits slavery [i.e., Thomas Jefferson], defines the principle on which our national and state constitutions are all professedly founded. The second paragraph of that instrument begins thus: ‘We hold these truths to be self-evident – that *all men are created equal* – that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among them are life, LIBERTY, and the pursuit of happiness.’”

I would have to consult constitutional historians to find any earlier arguments using the Declaration to interpret the Constitution. It was later part of Frederick Douglass's argument in breaking with William Lloyd Garrison, and it is the key political concept in Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. Certainly, this utterance of Timothy Fuller's is important and comes strikingly early.



Timothy Fuller strongly supported John Quincy Adams over Andrew Jackson when the 1824 presidential election had to be resolved in the House of Representatives. Fuller then left U.S. Congress to become the speaker of the Massachusetts House of Representatives and to return to the practice of law. He bought the Dana Mansion in Cambridge in part to host a ball for Adams in hopes of gaining an ambassadorship in Europe, deepening Margaret's appetite for travelling there. Adams attended the 1825 event, but was still in mourning for his father, and neither danced nor gave Fuller any appointment. Fuller's subsequent retirement from politics upon Jackson's winning the presidency in 1828 may have been more the act of a disillusioned idealist than most accounts seem to realize. In any case, it seems clear that Margaret Fuller grew up with a father who was not only anti-slavery, but who also publicly argued against slavery on the logical basis of the Declaration of Independence.

“A Beauteous Tree” Exhibit Catalogue, Now Available

Jenessa Kenway

The [catalogue](#) for “A Beauteous Tree: Margaret Fuller’s ‘Femality,’” the exhibit that I curated at the Marjorie Barrick Museum of Art at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, from May 28 to July 24, 2021, is now available in its permanent online home where my curator’s essay can be read and images of the text and artwork pairings can be enjoyed.

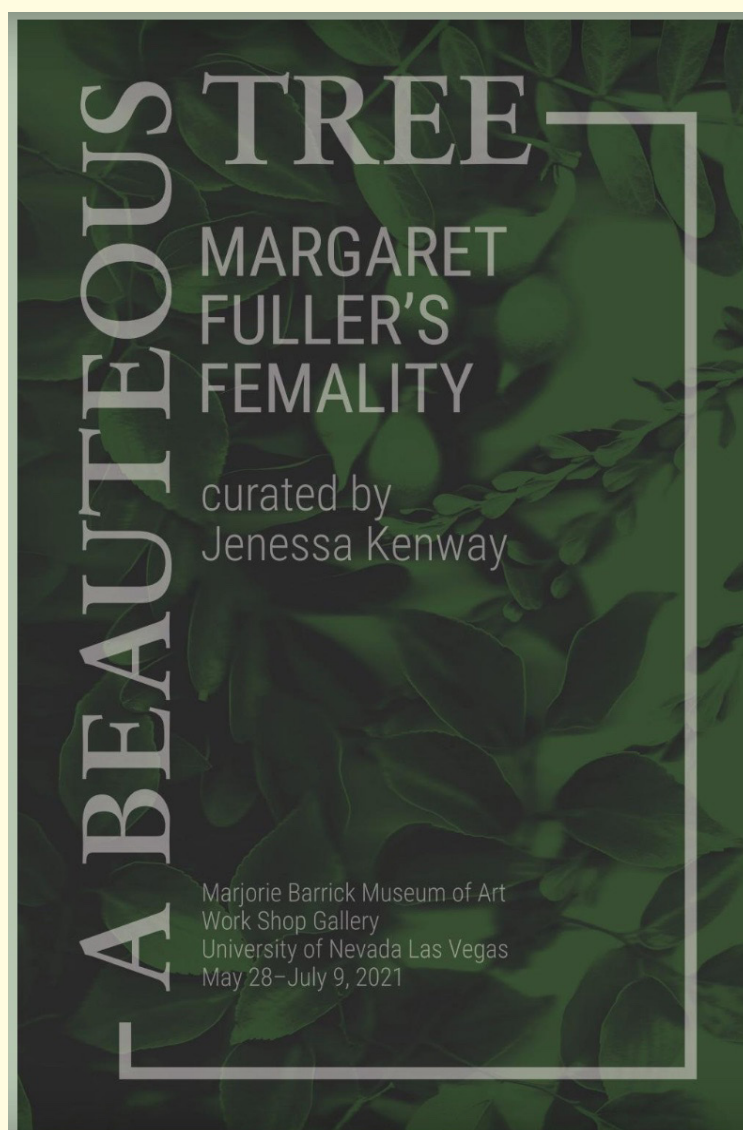
I always had a thing for willow trees, so when I came across Margaret Fuller’s quirky visionary essay “The Magnolia of Lake Pontchartrain,” the willow-girl in me fell in love with the leafy female protagonist’s story. Inspiration from a panel presentation at SSAWW 2018 that covered a literary art exhibit about Louisa May Alcott gave me the idea to curate an exhibit showcasing Fuller and her wonderful essay on the magnolia tree. It also allowed me to comment on Fuller’s notion of “femality” and offered an alternative expression of gender identity through tree form.

The exhibit at the Marjorie Barrick Art Museum was even better than I imagined. The pairings of paintings and sculptures with feminist quotes by Fuller, Mary Wollstonecraft, Virginia Woolf, and Donna Haraway looked spectacular! I’m extremely grateful for the [terrific lecture](#) that Dr. Christina Katopodis gave on Zoom about the exhibit that was attended by many Fullerenes.

For a more detailed description of my inspiration for the exhibit, check out the blog on the [Margaret Fuller Society page](#).

The exhibit now lives on in the online catalogue and as a print catalogue in the archives of the museum paired with a copy of a wonderful book called [The Architecture of Trees](#). My informal [video tour](#) of the exhibit is available on YouTube.

Support for the exhibition came from the [UNLV Jean Nidetch CARE Center](#), a [Nevada Humanities Project Grant](#), [The National Endowment for the Humanities](#), and the [WESTAF Regional Arts Resilience Fund](#), a relief grant developed in partnership with The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to support arts organizations in the 13-state western region during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Reviews

The Light Above: A Memoir with Margaret Fuller

Maria Dintino

Shanti Arts, 2022, 182 pp.

Lisa West, *Financial and Membership Officer*

Maria Dintino's preface to [*The Light Above: A Memoir with Margaret Fuller*](#) opens with a series of questions. What was she to do with "all the information and my infatuation with this woman, Margaret Fuller," since she had read "everything written by her—her books, columns, and letters"—and much about her written by others? "I was at a loss. I had unburied this person and didn't know what to do with her" (11).

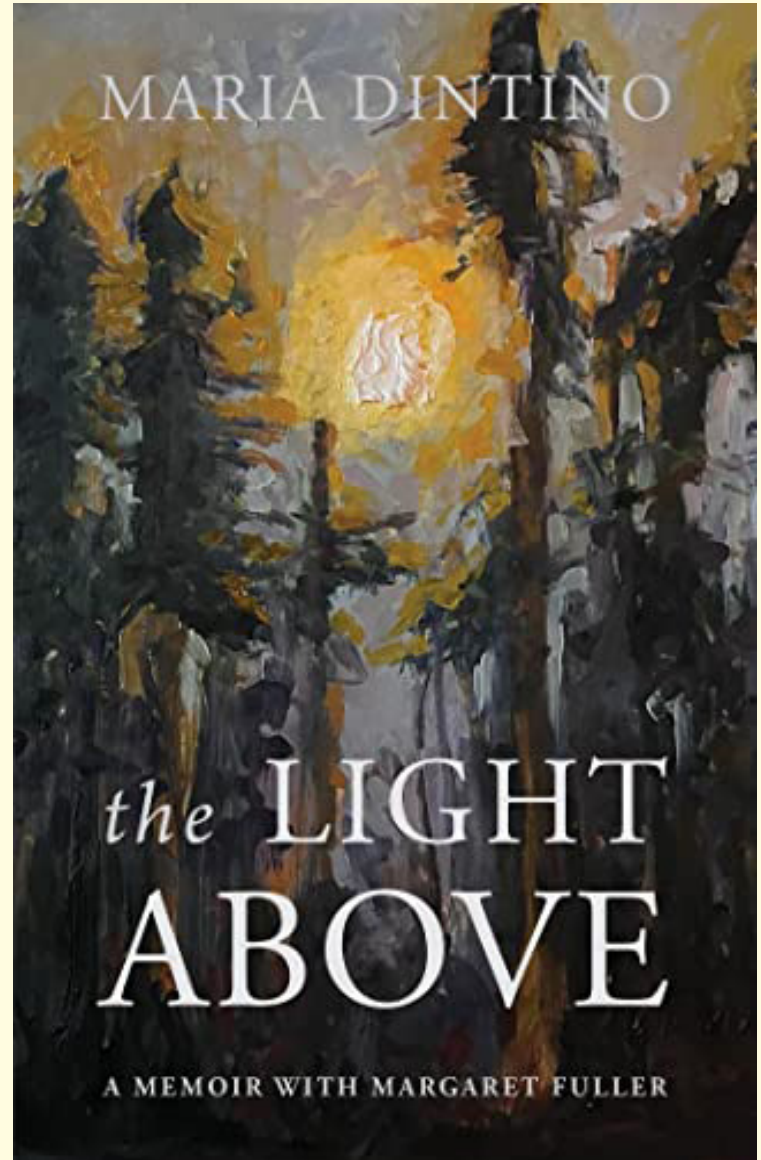
These sentiments echo what we have heard from the Phyllis Cole Award-winner Christina Asquith, as well as others outside academic circles: How encountering Fuller is transformative and how readers see her writing and life as a call to "do" something, whether it is to engage in activism or literary recovery, or to share her with others.

Dintino decides to "write from the heart" and recognizes her writing became "a story about me too": "I was not allowed to write her story without writing my own because I had unburied two women" (11). The book thus engages the process of reading Fuller "from the inside out" (11), considering how her challenges can be likened to one's own, taking seriously the value both of reading and of sharing knowledge, and recognizing that some forms of scholarship are meant not to just stay on the page but to come to life.

This unusual memoir alternates between chapters focused on each woman, all told in first person. "Maria's chapters are about me as I remember my life. Margaret's are my interpretation of her and her life. They are not her words; they are not her thoughts. They are my interpretation of her words and thoughts, my interpretation of who she was and is, my interpretation of her feelings and experiences based on what I learned of her" (11).

The chapters, each about one to two pages long, are mostly but not entirely in biographical order. Through linked accounts of Fuller, Dintino recounts in detail how she herself grew up in a large New England family, daughter of a first-generation Italian American father, and how she navigated between her father's traditions

and ways of interacting and those of her mother's New Hampshire family. Her experiences make Fuller's seem more current, a little less confined to the nineteenth century. Paired chapters cover similar experiences in life—such as the deaths of their fathers, or a new work experience, or the sickness of an infant—even when not occurring at precisely the same age.



Walking plays a central role for each woman, with comments not only on the connection between walking and thinking but also awareness of the meaning of walking in particular places, whether the schoolyard, Cambridge, a neighborhood, or the beach. Educational experiences and travel also create connections across the two women's most important memories.

There are differences, of course, between the two women's lives. For example, Dintino discusses how sheltered her family was: "The monthly *National Geographic* and

our *World Book Encyclopedia* set were my means to peek at the rest of the world” (47). And yet the memoir shows similar issues related to speaking up, claiming one’s own identity, finding one’s way amidst family expectations, encountering a world broader than one knew about, and pondering the significance of beauty and truth.

For me the greatest pleasure in reading this “Memoir with Margaret Fuller” is the resonance that happens across the paired sections. The “Margaret” sections are not a fictionalized autobiography but rather sometimes retell known biographical events in first person and in other times venture into how Margaret might have felt about those events. The “Maria” sections delve into more intimate territory and anecdotal detail, whether the emotional pull of a difficult relationship or health obstacles like callouses on vocal chords that impede speech. The interconnections are illuminating. For instance, “Maria” shares, “All my health issues centered on my ears and throat, listening and speaking. I’d be a fool not to consider the significance of such clustered maladies” (95), while “Margaret” confides, when discussing a bout of headaches and low energy that made her take to her bed, “Once I’d resigned myself to where I would be spending the next hours and even days, once I understood that this was bigger and stronger than the other parts of me, I settled in for the excursion. When thoughts came, I examined them patiently and thoroughly. When feelings came, some strong, I let the tears flow” (95).

There are several longer back-and-forth sections, where paired chapters expand into a series of interconnected chapters. For example, they discuss role models, with “Margaret” beginning with a discussion of figures from her classical reading, then “Maria” considering if a colleague would be an effective mentor, then back to “Margaret” discussing Lydia Maria Francis and others—and yearning to meet Harriet Martineau.

“Maria” interweaves her own professional challenges into these references to historic figures, which not only shows how the need for role models continues into the present but also asks the reader to consider how we might think of female figures in our lives in juxtaposition to those wonderful women whose past lives we savor. The textual organization leads to numerous such connections.

Never does it feel as if the memoir is all about Dintino or that it uses Fuller flippantly; instead, the joint memoir is thought-provoking in its connections and desire for a fuller self.

If we take Dintino at her word in the preface, this mem-

oir is indeed a home run. Drawing on the opening epigraph which quotes Fuller—“If you have knowledge, let others light their candles in it”—she states: “You knowing who Margaret Fuller is after reading this is success. You telling others about this remarkable woman surpasses my mission. And you discovering anything about yourself through reading this memoir hits it right out of the park” (11).

This is a lovely book that reminds us that the value of reading Fuller lies, perhaps, in how she makes us reflect on ourselves. It also reminds us of a kind of intimacy—between women’s lives, between reading and living—that emerges in ventures like the MFS that seek to make Fuller’s life present.

Concord: A Novel

Don Zancanella

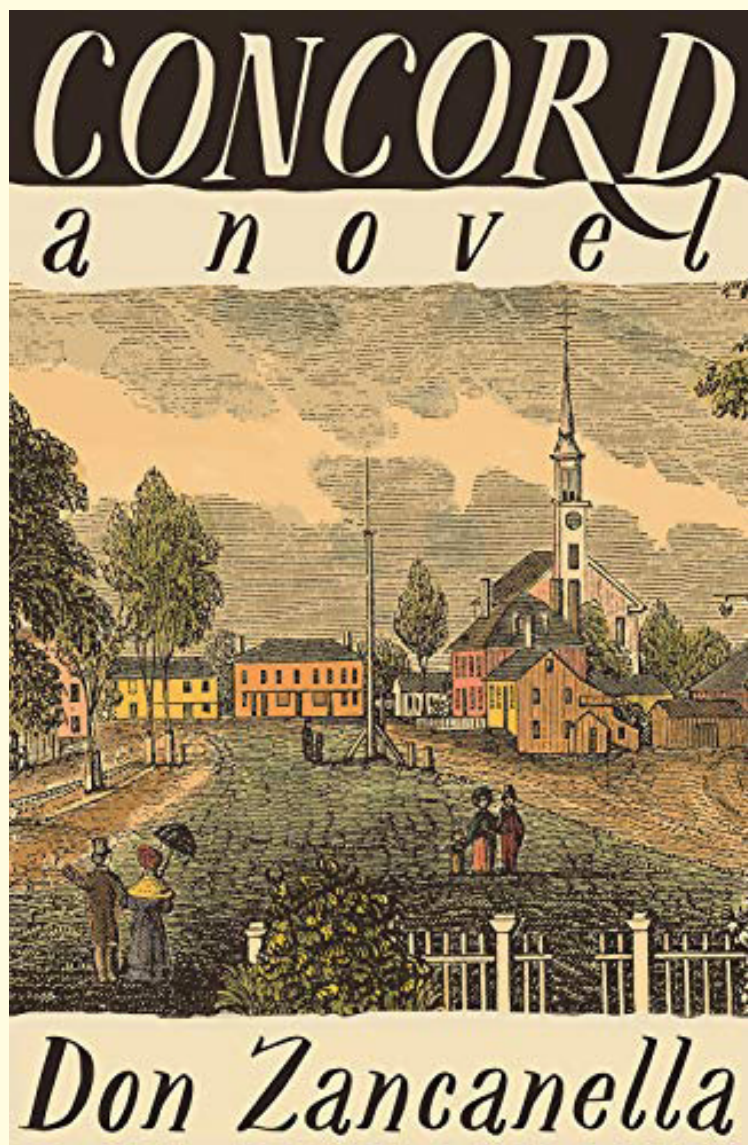
Serving House, 2021, 360 pp.

Lisa West, Financial and Membership Officer

The newsletter is timely in its inclusion of this book review. Summer reading is about to begin, and *Concord: A Novel* (South Orange, NJ: Serving House Books, 2021) is a fun, light read that will likely not have any surprises for this readership. But it will bring the lighthearted pleasure of recognizing familiar literary moments recast as fiction—and of considering highly regarded literary figures orbiting as characters in someone else’s literary creation. Zancanella calls it “historical fiction,” but the book feels more like a blend of novel manners, letters, journals, and excerpts from biographical works, told in third person and focusing on the characters of Margaret (Fuller), Henry (Thoreau), and Sophia (Peabody) through alternating chapters. This combination reminds me of adaptations or montages of classics, and while there is little action *per se* in the novel, which focuses instead on interpersonal relations and internal musings, it is easy to visualize and have it overlap in my mind with *Little Women* movies and filmic revisitations of nineteenth-century texts.

Zancanella writes: “*Concord* is an imagined version of what might have happened rather than a scrupulous record of historical events” (355). He not only uses letters and journals as resources, but he also sometimes uses textual quotes in dialogue or as internal dialogue (355). Readers familiar with these literary figures thus will see familiar phrases presented in unfamiliar modalities. He also alters “the rate at which time passes” (355), changes

the sequence of events, and eliminates characters unnecessary for particular scenes. As a result, the novel condenses Concord into a series of very small social circles, as if there really were only a dozen or so people in the area, all of whom have intense and overlapping relationships. Since literary criticism and biography tend to focus on one person at a time, one fascinating aspect of the read was jumping from character to character. I also was delighted to see Emerson and Hawthorne relegated to supporting roles in women's journeys; in particular, Hawthorne's presence as character more than writer is unexpectedly humorous in many moments. As the novel develops and the interconnections become more numerous, it is also rewarding to notice how Zancanella contrasts, for example, Margaret's first Conversation—tentative, with others reluctant to participate—with a loud, less focused meeting of the Transcendental Club as it initiates *The Dial*. The book's scenes include numerous moments of reading, listening to lectures, thinking about art, composing letters, engaging in conversation—and these develop lovely resonances across sections.



While the book cover stresses the interwoven love stories, I would say it is more about complex interpersonal relationships than unrequited love, with Margaret's section featuring Cary Sturgis, Sam Ward, Anna Barker, Elizabeth Peabody, and others. In one chapter, Emerson has asked Margaret to go to Watertown to listen to a minister, and she spends the journey wondering how to ask him about her salary for *The Dial*. "Even though they are talking business, she feels very close to Waldo today. She has his full attention. Her thoughts and words mean a great deal to him right now—after all, she is to be the editor of *The Dial*—and she revels in that knowledge. There is no other place she'd rather be, no one she'd rather be with" (190). That pleasure is interrupted when Waldo mentions that the minister "is the sort of speaker Lidian likes best" (190), which makes Margaret question why she is there with Waldo at all, or if she should apologize to Lidian (for being with Waldo? for listening to her sort of speaker?), ending with expressing her negative views of marriage in general: "She admires Waldo so much, in so many different ways, that it's particularly unpleasant to find that his own marriage is no exception" (191) to the pattern she has noticed of women not being treated as well as they ought to be. The novel continually links broad views—such as Fuller's critique of marriage—to small, intimate scenes and daily, ordinary interactions.

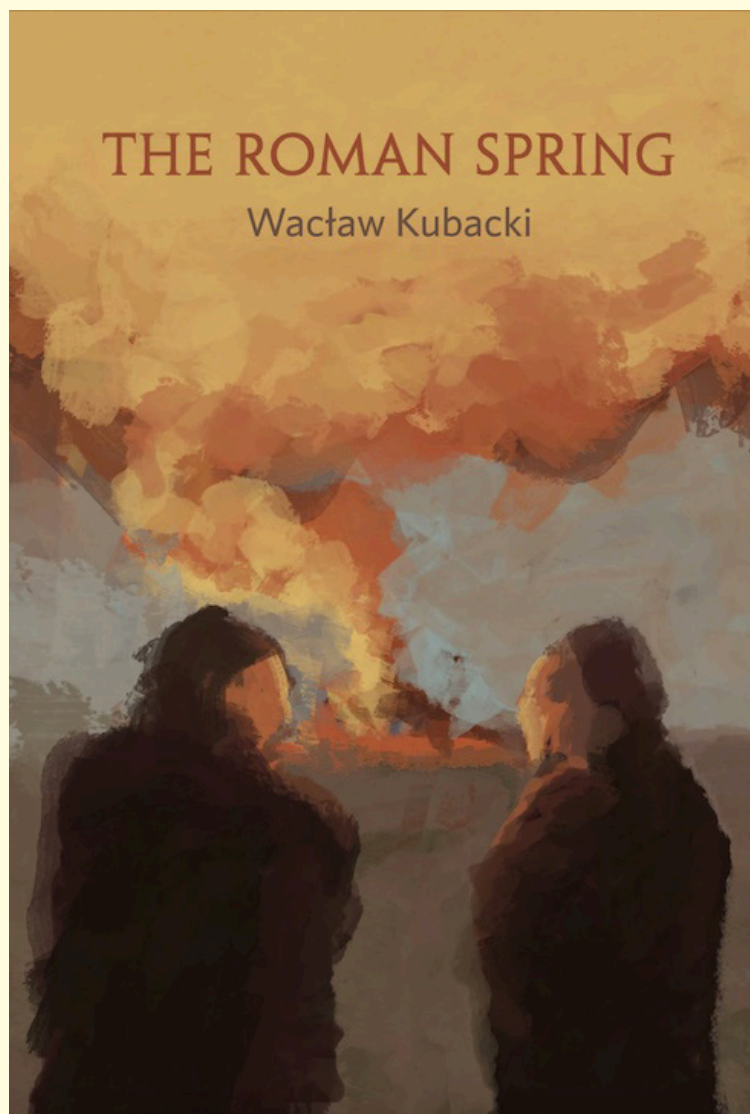
Concord deals with a narrow window of time and ends when the characters seem to grow into familiar Transcendental literary figures: Henry finding solace in walking; Margaret deciding to move to New York; Sophia newly married. In a way, then, the novel could be thought of as the re-creation of the literary figures we know so well, providing a pre-story to their well-known identities, suggesting that perhaps it was not inevitable that they became whom we know them for. And that is another pleasure in the read: that their struggles and anxieties and daily concerns are as fundamental as their ideals and philosophies.

In terms of teaching value, I do think it would be interesting to combine excerpts of this novel with *The Sedgwick in Love* by Timothy Kenslea, to link scenes from the novel with related passages from Thoreau's, Peabody's, or Fuller's journals or letters or to link to biographical studies. *Concord* is very clearly a novel and not a fictionalized biography, and I think students would appreciate discussions on genre—journal, biography, novel, letter—or adaptations that could emerge from engaging with this work.

Good News

Nanette Hilton, Column Editor

Gail Spilsbury shares news of the English translation (from Polish) and publication of *The Roman Spring* (1955), a new play by Waclaw Kubacki about the friendship between feminist, journalist, and foreign war correspondent Margaret Fuller (1810–1850), and Poland’s great poet Adam Mickiewicz (1798–1855). The play is set in Rome, Italy, in the period of Europe’s widespread revolutions known as the Spring of Nations. Kubacki’s play, translated for the first time into English, celebrates two prominent intellectuals of the 19th century who became intimate friends. It offers a new and rare addition to these writers’ archives. This is a project of [Bergamot Books](#) (Gail’s press) and available both there and at [Amazon](#).



Eagan Dean reports that on April 2, 2022, he gave “a paper at C19: The Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists called ‘Woman in the Nineteenth Century and the Anti-politics of Reprinting, 1845-1980.’” It’s excerpted from an article he’s working on about the politics of the paratexts in posthumous editions of *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*. Eagan also has received a visiting fellowship with the Houghton Library for Summer, 2022, to examine the Fuller papers and expand the article.

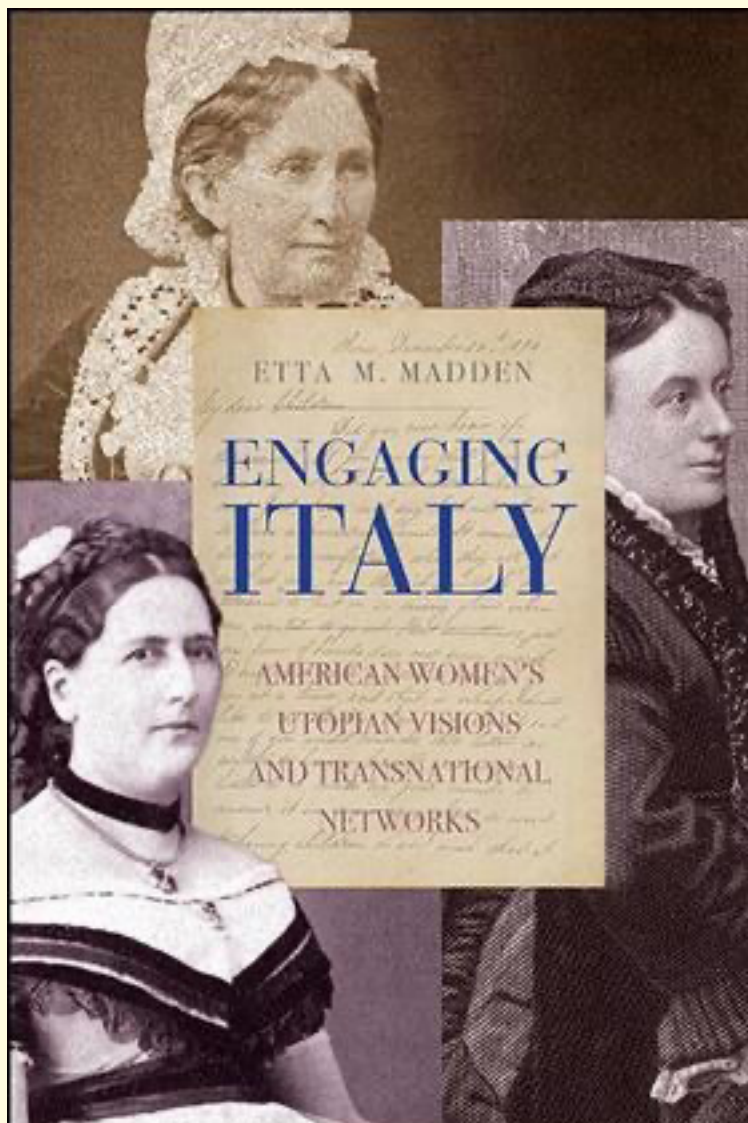
Megan Marshall shares that last winter she was interviewed, along with Judith Thurman of *The New Yorker* and Katie Kornacki of MFS for BBC World Service’s program, “The Forum.” BBC radio host Bridget Kendall narrated and posed questions for a show devoted to Margaret Fuller. “Speaking for Katie and myself,” Megan writes, “we did our best under somewhat arduous conditions, recording from cramped sound booths on a transatlantic connection. I’m sure we got in some good points! And the producer had a format worked out that I think will bring good attention to Fuller, for what they kept reminding us is a global audience (lest we forget the listeners didn’t know the first thing about the subject!).” The Fuller show began airing March 31, 2022, and is available from [BBC programs](#), [by download](#), through [Apple podcasts](#), and via many other podcast apps.

Etta Madden tells us about her new book, [Engaging Italy: American Women’s Utopian Visions and Transnational Networks](#) (SUNY Press, 2022) in which Margaret Fuller plays a role as a foundational figure. The paper edition of *Engaging Italy* will be out in October. “I’ve given related presentations on Fuller panels at recent ALA and SSAWW conferences,” Etta writes. “If anyone wants a review copy, they can let me know or contact SUNY Press.” About the book, Etta explains: “American women abroad have often been more than tourists. *Engaging Italy* depicts the intertwined lives of three now-little-known figures—Caroline Crane Marsh, Anne Hampton Brewster and Emily Bliss Gould—whose paths crossed as they lived abroad for more than fifteen years. These women seized opportunities to be engaged in the political changes of the 1860s and ’70s known as Italian Unification.

“Brewster wrote weekly for U.S. newspapers in Boston, Philadelphia, and across the country. Gould published articles in two periodicals before devoting her full attention to founding a school and orphanage and fundraising for it. Marsh, the U.S. Ambassador’s wife, oversaw teachers for another girls’ school and orphanage, chaired com-

mittees affiliated with it, and managed a household full of family and guests—all while being deemed an ‘invalid.’ These women chose to act abroad, even as they realized that life in Italy was not the Utopia they first envisioned. Perhaps considered as taking an easy escape from the U.S. as the Civil War raged and during Reconstruction, these women wrestled with letting go of their utopian visions and determining how to live amid conditions that were—if not dystopian—more challenging for them than life in the US.

“[One reviewer] praises the book as ‘accessible, lively prose and engaging storytelling [that] brings these women and their experiences to life and makes the case for their significance.’ Other reviewers write: ‘The book is theoretically informed, but Madden avoids jargon-laden prose’; ‘*Engaging Italy* is] an impressive synthesis of substantial archival work’; and Madden’s book represents ‘extensive research into C19 women’s literary and reform history.’”



Serena Mocci relays the good news that “last November at the University of Bologna I defended my Ph.D. dissertation on Margaret Fuller and Lydia Maria Child, ‘Domesticità e impero statunitense. Genere, razza e classe nel pensiero politico di Lydia Maria Child e Margaret Fuller’ (‘Domesticity and the American Empire: Gender, Race and Class in Lydia Maria Child’s and Margaret Fuller’s Political Thought’).

“Furthermore, on March 21, 2022, I was awarded the ‘Paola Bora Award’ for the best Ph.D. dissertation defended in the past three years in the field of women’s studies. The award was offered by the Casa della Donna of Pisa, the three Universities of Pisa (Scuola Normale Superiore, University of Pisa, Scuola Superiore Sant’Anna), the Italian Society of Women Historians, the Italian Society of Literature, and the Province of Pisa. [Here’s more info](#) along with the link to [the video of the award ceremony](#).

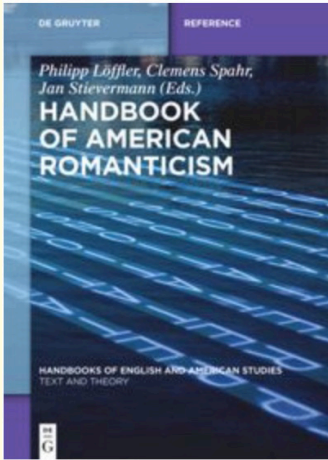
“Sorry, it’s all in Italian, but I thought it was important to share this good news from the other side of the Atlantic, so that you know that we’re doing our best to keep Margaret’s memory alive in a country she deeply loved!”

Mollie Barnes brings the news that Eva Rodriguez has been named the new editor-in-chief of The Fuller Project. Eva’s “14-year career at the *Washington Post* includes serving as deputy foreign editor, including for their current coverage of Ukraine, and as the founding editor of the Post’s freelance Talent Network.” For more about Rodriguez’s appointment and The Fuller Project, see the [press release here](#).

David Robinson shares news that *ESQ: A Journal of Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture* (Vol. 67 No. 3-4 2021) is devoted to “Re-Transcendentalizing the Transcendentalists.” His article, “Margaret Fuller and the Alternative Transcendentalism,” is on pages 571-597. Laura Dassow Walls also has an article in this issue, “Transcendentalism Meets the Anthropocene.” Also included are five other articles on Transcendentalist issues.

“There is also a new book,” David writes, “by Clemens Spahr: [American Romanticism and the Popularization of Literary Education](#) from Lexington Books, 2002. There are discussions here on Fuller, Elizabeth Peabody, Bronson Alcott, Frederick Douglass, the *Dial*, and others on 19th century educational innovation.”

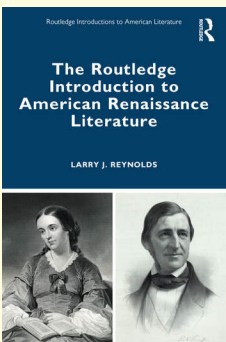
Charlene Avallone adds: “Clemens Spahr also recently co-edited, with Philipp Löffler and Jan Stievermann, the de Gruyter [Handbook of American Romanticism](#) (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021), which locates Fuller and other ante-



bellum U.S. writers in the broader contexts of Romantic thought, aesthetics, politics, and history. Among the several essays bringing attention to Fuller, MFS member Sandy Petrulionis writes on ‘Romanticism and Social Reform’ and my chapter discusses *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (pages 335-354). Mentions of Fuller also appear in other essays in this collection.”

Phyllis Cole offers that “part of the ‘good news’ in recent years is that Margaret Fuller is featured or presented as a peer in virtually all the compendia of mid-nineteenth century American literature. Before the De Gruyter series got to American Romanticism, an earlier (2016) volume, [Handbook of Transatlantic North American Studies](#), ed. Julia Straub, included my portrait of Fuller as one of just four author studies; you can see the [Table of Contents here](#).”

Larry Reynolds writes: “Since folks seem interested in recent attention to Fuller, let me say I include a chapter titled ‘Fuller, Fern, and Women’s Rights’ in my [Routledge Introduction to American Renaissance Literature](#) (Routledge: London and New York, 2022). Most of what I say will probably be familiar to you, MFS members (since I assume a lay audience), but a few paragraphs may not. Briggs Bailey was kind enough to be a reader for me, and I draw heavily on Phyllis Cole’s research. I insisted that Routledge include a picture of Fuller on the cover along with Emerson.”



She Said What? Memorable Quotes or Misquotes by or about Margaret Fuller

Eagan Dean shares that he’s been volunteering with a program for queer and trans youth that has caused him to think about his favorite Fuller quote. He writes: “Fuller argues that this variation is not to be feared, but celebrated. Speaking metaphorically of such youth, she writes, ‘[N]o need to clip the wings of any bird that wants to soar and sing, or finds in itself the strength of pinion for a migratory flight unusual to its kind’ (Margaret Fuller, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* in [The Essential Margaret Fuller](#), edited by Jeffrey Steele, 2nd ed., Rutgers University Press, 1995, p. 346). I’m not yet really sure how to be a trans role model (or adult, really!), but I’ve been thinking a lot about the ways we can better cherish and protect our trans children who are at risk of having their wings clipped. In light of rising anti-trans laws across the US—most notably Texas’s new law against supportive parents and long-accepted standards of medical care—I have found a lot of comfort in Fuller’s theory of the trans child as a bird already capable of soaring so long as we can defend their right to that potential.”

Sleuthing for the source of Edgar Allan Poe’s supposed division of humanity into three classes—“men, women, and Margaret Fuller”—has been a wild ride. You may have read or heard this quote floating around the internet or even in a notable publication. Some Fullerenes weigh in on the possible source, misattribution, and perpetuated gossip: According to **Larry J. Reynolds**, “It doesn’t exist. It’s probably a paraphrase of a sentence in his review of her.” **Phyllis Cole** passes on **Richard Kopley’s** “piece in the puzzle” which he found in a review for *Graham’s Magazine* (“Our Amateur Poets, No. 1--Flaccus,” March 1843). There, Poe wrote the following: “But we are fairly wearied with this absurd theme. Who calls Mr. [Thomas] Ward a poet? He is a second-rate, or a third-rate, or perhaps a ninety-ninth-rate poetaster. He is a gentleman of ‘elegant leisure,’ and gentlemen of elegant leisure are, for the most part, neither men, women, nor Harriet Martineaus.” Kopley comments: “I wonder who turned this into the infamous quotation about Margaret Fuller! Obviously, the Poe scholars don’t know exactly where his comment on her came from either. But it may have been a favorite insult of EAP’s, applicable to either side of the gender divide.” **John Hay** claims “Perry Miller seems to be the culprit here. He provided no citation for it when he parenthetically offered this remark as Poe’s in his 1962 volume on Fuller, and most folks who attribute the phrase to Poe offer Miller as their source.”

Then and Now: The Siege of Ukraine 2022 and the Siege of Rome 1849

Related to our current political moment, Mario Bannoni shares the following excerpt from his foreword to his new collection of all twenty-seven reports Margaret Fuller wrote while in Italy, Margaret Fuller, Corrispondente di guerra—Quando Roma capitale era un Sogno (Margaret Fuller, War Correspondent—When Rome as Capital [of Italy] Was a Dream).

Mario Bannoni

PART I: In 1849, a foreign force landed in the harbor of Rome, pretending they were bringing brotherly solidarity to the people of the Roman State. They were not there to forcefully overcome the government of Rome, they said, and they erected “the tree of liberty,” a symbol of freedom since the French Revolution. They flew the French tricolor alongside the Italian flag, and with reassuring words welcomed the delegates of the Roman Constitutional Assembly. After a few days, however, they placed their forces in strategic positions, attempting to justify their moves as routine training. They then sieged Rome and soon overcame the city’s forces, toppling a democratically elected government.

The circumstances in which Margaret Fuller found herself in Rome compelled her to write on paper with pen and ink, as today’s correspondents in the Russo-Ukrainian War communicate with us in print, online, and on TV. While the modes of communication have changed, the falsity with which certain despots grab power in the world has not.

For months prior to the invasion, the world’s leaders and diplomats asked Mr. Putin to account for why he had amassed 200,000 troops and major military equipment on the borders of Ukraine. Putin repeatedly stated that Russia was there for routine exercises. When this amassing of troops had become excessive and was clearly configured as a weapon of pressure, diplomats were told the forces were there to prevent Ukraine from joining NATO and the EU: that is, to prevent Ukraine from practicing its sacrosanct right of choosing its allies. Diplomats attempted to negotiate with Russia and find a joint solution. Putin repeatedly mocked analysts, claiming their warnings of an imminent Russian attack were “Western hysteria.” Only by late February 2022 did people understand what Putin evidently had in mind from the beginning: the invasion of Ukraine, which he assesses as mere “geographical expression.” In 1847, Metternich defined a non-unified Italy in similar ways.

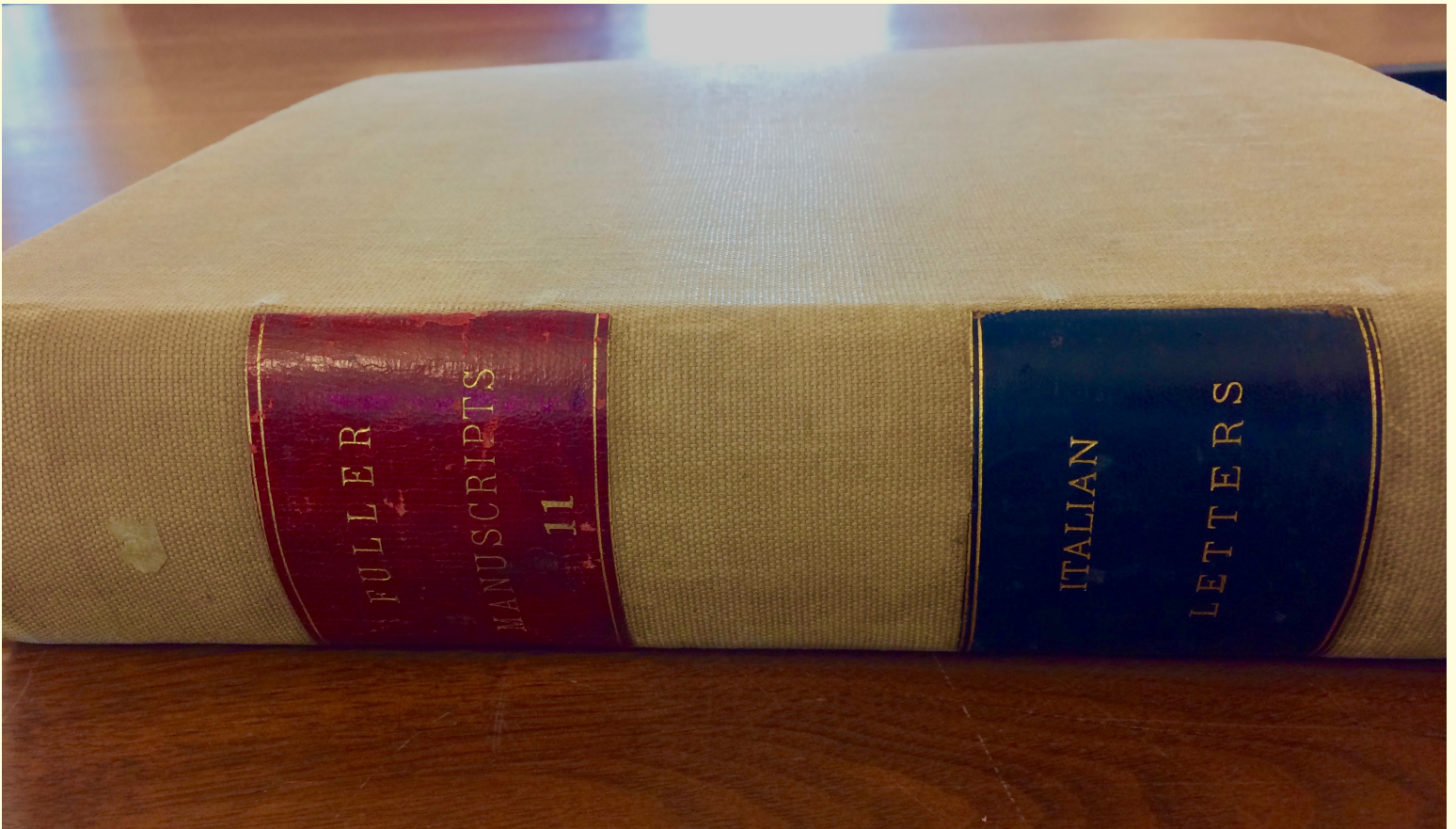
Now Ukraine is under siege. The valiant Ukrainian people may be defeated, but they will not lose their honor while being joined in solidarity by much of the world. The same cannot be said about Putin’s regime, which has put the *fait accompli* in the face of the world and hides its shameful actions behind the disorienting communication of the times.

Today, listening to the news on TV, I identify with Margaret Fuller, who watched what was happening in Rome from her terrace in the Dies pension, scrutinizing the battlefield on the Janiculum Hill from afar. Even as a foreigner, she felt like a sister to those brave siblings who resisted not only for themselves, but to affirm the laws of the masses and the just.

I cry for the Ukrainians, for the mothers who are in bomb shelters with their crying children in their arms; for the mothers of Ukrainian soldiers defending their homeland in the face of overwhelming forces; for the young Russian soldiers thrown into this war of oppression, who fight without conviction, as Margaret Fuller wrote of the disheartened French. They will not even have the consolation of dying for an honorable cause, but only to affirm the law of the few and the corrupt. I hope, however, that the rest of the Russian people will not align themselves with Putin’s follies, but will instead aspire for a homeland that is respected because it is fair and tolerant, not because it is strong and ruthless.

PART II: As Fuller wrote recalling the political happenings of her time, we arrive now at the second act of this drama. Again, the analogies between the siege of Rome in 1849 and today’s siege of Kiev prove astonishing. While the French were sure they would quickly enter the Eternal City and be welcomed by its residents, they were in fact scornfully repelled by Roman soldiers defending their ramparts. Similarly, the Russian forces thought they could carry out a “Blitzkrieg”—grabbing the country and capital in a few days, with the consent of a weak and demoralized Ukrainian army. They were mistaken. The unexpected, fierce resistance faced by the invaders—both past and present—convinced them to slow their actions and to adopt a temporary diversion in order to receive reinforcements. In both cases, such diversions took the form of negotiations.

In 1849, the French sent the diplomat Ferdinand de Lesseps to Rome with the declared intention of avoiding war between the two “sister” countries by negotiating with the Roman government. But de Lesseps’s charge was actually to stall. Similarly in 2022, the Russian forces sent obscure functionaries to negotiate a complex and



time-consuming treaty with major Ukrainian officials. In both cases, the invaders did not refrain from making military advances. In fact, while talks continue, the world watches long columns of Russian tanks advancing, rockets and airplanes bombing Ukrainian infrastructure, and Russian military units seizing cities, ports, and peripheral territories.

I hope that if Ukrainian and Russian forces sign an agreement, it will be sincere and that these two sister countries can establish long-standing peace, and that respect will be restored. My hope is hampered by my knowledge of the outcome of the earlier historical treaty. In 1849, de Lesseps finally signed an agreement, which he was in fact under secret orders to not respect.

As with Rome in 1849, the decision to seize Kiev was made long in advance. All necessary evidence was available to see this coming. Those responsible decided to ignore it, however, and to delude themselves into thinking that Putin was but playing games. Now, it is too late to avoid catastrophe.

PART III: But perhaps we are in time for the long-term stabilization and rebuilding of Ukraine, and for other Eastern Europe countries, and for the Russian people, and for the rest of the world, which I hope—to paraphrase Fuller—is one and beats with one single heart.

Recalling the historical center of Kiev's holy monasteries and churches which I visited two years ago, I can only sympathize with Margaret Fuller's words for Rome when she wrote:

Yes! The French, who pretended to be the advanced guard of civilization, are bombarding Rome. They dare take the risk of destroying the richest bequests made to man by the great Past. Nay, they seem to do it in an especially barbarian manner. It was thought they would avoid, as much as possible, the hospitals for the wounded, marked to their view by the black banner, and the sites where are the most precious monuments; but their bombs have fallen on the chief hospital, and the Capitol evidently is especially aimed at.

Similarly to the French regime in 1849, it is clear that today's Russian regime does not care about consequences to others' lives. I choose to trust, however, that the citizens of Russia—another victim of this war—will act now, decisively, to bring this massacre to an end.

Tributes

On the Life and Career of Charles Capper, 1944–2021

Megan Marshall

At the Organization of American Historians conference in Boston, Massachusetts, on April 1, 2022, Megan Marshall delivered this speech at the “Roundtable on the Life and Career of Charles Capper, 1944–2021.” Capper, author of the two-volume [Margaret Fuller: An American Romantic Life](#), was also a significant influence on the Margaret Fuller Society both at its founding and throughout the years.



It's a great honor to be invited to speak here today as we remember the life and honor the work of Charles Capper. Charlie was one of those rare scholars whose writings earned him respect, I might even say *reverence*, in a field outside the one in which he was trained. I speak as an emissary from that field—literary criticism and biography. I'm here as a spokesperson for the Margaret Fuller Society, one of the many author societies formed in the early 1990s, in the wake of the founding of the American Literature Association by a breakaway group of scholars

eager for conferences and conversations more intimate than those offered by the Modern Language Association, the MLA.

I'm also here to speak as one of Margaret Fuller's many biographers—and there have been many. Among us, though, only one could fairly be called “Margaret Fuller's biographer”—and that is Charlie Capper. Biographers know all too well that writing a “definitive” biography simply can't be done. New material comes along, stylistic fashions and perspectives change. But Charlie Capper's two-volume *Margaret Fuller: An American Romantic Life* is a definitive biography if there ever was one. I don't expect it to be matched in our lifetimes. I think it's no coincidence that the founding of the Margaret Fuller Society followed quickly on the 1992 publication of Charlie's Bancroft Prize-winning first volume.

In recent years, the Margaret Fuller Society has been mourning a number of its founders. Three early presidents of the MFS are gone—Jeffrey Steele, whose anthology of Fuller's writings is a standard text in college classrooms, died in 2018. In 2021, Charlie's death in July was followed in November by those of Joel Myerson, known to many as the dean of Transcendentalism studies, who compiled Fuller's bibliography and edited her New York journalism; and Bell Gale Chevigny, the author of the first feminist biography of Fuller, *The Woman and the Myth*, published in 1976. So when I looked to the first officers of the Society for recollections of Charlie from the early years, when he served as a board member and organized a conference in Rome, I was confronted by a sad blank.

Larry Reynolds, a Society president from 2012–2014, who was present at the founding, along with Susan Belasco, Larry's co-editor of Margaret Fuller's *New York Tribune* dispatches from Europe, both wanted to be heard. Larry writes how very much he “appreciated the precision and restraint that characterized [Charlie's] work as an historian.” Larry recalls that Charlie “helpfully applied the brakes to my more speculative interpretations of Fuller and her work,” and he offers an example of Charlie's gracious manner in applying those brakes: “He took issue with my characterization [...] of Fuller's politics in Italy and had us describe it as utopian socialism of a Fourieristic kind, rather than revolutionary socialism. Later, I became more convinced of her commitment to radical revolution, but Charlie saw her politics in Europe as an extension, or rather, an evolu-

tion, of what he called her romantic religious messianism. Despite this disagreement, he was very complimentary of the talk I gave [at the Rome conference he'd organized] and the essay that grew out of it, "Righteous Violence": The Roman Republic and Margaret Fuller's Revolutionary Example,' which he published in his and Cristina Giorcelli's *Margaret Fuller: Transatlantic Crossings in a Revolutionary Age* (2008)."

Susan Belasco adds: "[Charlie] was instrumental in the founding and development of the Fuller Society. As a historian, he eagerly joined with all of us in American literature to promote the idea of a society and make it happen [...]. He was a splendid colleague, in that class of people that I think of as my colleague in the larger world. I will miss him."

Robert Hudspeth, another founder and early president of the Society, whose indispensable six-volume edition of Margaret Fuller's correspondence was published between 1983 and 1994, writes, "Charlie and I worked together for a number of years. We had frequent email conversations about Fuller and the problems of documenting her life. We freely traded information and ideas, and, of course, Charlie was full of ideas—and very good ones. I had the pleasure of enjoying his considerable wit as well as his knowledge. I was always glad that a historian as talented as Charlie was writing about Fuller. He put her life and work into an historical context that was both rich and suggestive, more so than that which we on the literary side had at that time been able to do. He was the right person at the right time, just as we had come to take Fuller more into account of our intellectual life."



Bell Chevigny, Charles Capper, Robert Hudspeth

No serious—or even not so serious—writer on Fuller can proceed without Hudspeth's *Letters* and Capper's *Life*. When Robert Richardson, the eminent biographer of Emerson, Thoreau, and William James kindly wrote a blurb for my own biography, he tactfully called it "the best *single* volume on Fuller." I knew what he was saying, and knew how right he was to include that nod to Charlie's superior achievement, his *two* volumes, in praising my later effort. It's important to remark, too, how rare it is for a biography of a woman to extend to two volumes. How Charlie persuaded Oxford of this plan, I don't know, but that is a remarkable feat in itself.

I couldn't have written my book without Charlie's, indeed I was inspired by his work to pursue mine. I'd spent twenty years on *The Peabody Sisters*, which I'd viewed as a campaign to bring other women of Transcendentalism besides Margaret Fuller into the light. During those two decades I'd come to dislike Fuller, who'd been unkind to Elizabeth Peabody, unappreciative of her many benefactions, and was only grudgingly accepting of Sophia Peabody's claims on Nathaniel Hawthorne. Fuller very likely held her first series of Conversations for women in the room Mary Peabody rented in Boston, but Mary was out teaching her own class of children during the day; Fuller accepted the room, offered to her by Elizabeth, and seemingly gave little thought to the Peabody sister who'd enabled her now-famous business plan.

But in reviewing Charlie's second volume, *The Public Years*, for *The London Review of Books* in 2007, I was smitten. Charlie's biography was the kind of definitive work that enabled others. He'd done for Fuller the arduous and painstaking spadework in the archives that I'd done for the Peabodys over two decades. As Charlie writes in the introduction to his Volume One, his first aim was "to get the facts straight. This is no small matter. Most biographies of Fuller have reproduced 'facts' based on legends, claims of previous biographers, and, in several cases, sentimentally imagined scenes." For my Fuller biography, I wanted to focus on narrative, and Charlie's documentation, as well as that of the other Fuller scholars I've mentioned, enabled me to do so.

Charlie's books are masterful narratives, too. I wouldn't have fallen in love with Fuller if they weren't. Charlie's second aim, he tells us, was to "do justice to Fuller's complex personality." He quotes an early letter by Fuller's great friend and future biographer James Freeman Clarke: "What a sphynx is that girl? Who shall solve her?" "I do not pretend to have solved her," Charlie writes, "but I have tried to understand her." I think anyone who has read Charlie's books will agree that he succeeded there, too.

But Charlie's third and fourth aims are what set his books apart. He wanted to "create a social biography," he writes, presenting "Fuller thinking and acting with others" and within social movements, "from American Unitarianism to German Romanticism, from women's education to Italian republicanism." And finally, and fundamentally, Charlie was absorbed by Fuller's life of the mind, and her life as an intellectual. He explains that Fuller was the epitome of what, early in his academic career, he'd identified as the American intellectual type—"the conflicted, alienated, avant-garde thinker who, despite, or because of his (and sometimes her) alienation, looked hopefully to popular, world-historical transformations." Simultaneously, in the early 1970s, he'd been drawn to "the flowering of women's history, which was then pushing to the center of the historical stage whole battalions of previously marginalized outsiders." These two strands of outsiderhood—the disaffected intellectual, and the forgotten heroine of the past—came together for Charlie in Margaret Fuller.

My two volumes of Capper's *Fuller* are studded with sticky notes, the margins filled with penciled stars and check marks, the text with circled passages and underlinings. I have *used* those books. The pages are interleaved with note cards, and an invitation to the book party at Charlie's apartment in Brookline celebrating the launch of Volume Two in May 2007, where I was fortunate to be able to congratulate him in person, perhaps our first meeting despite years of living just across the Charles River from each other. Our worlds—his as a history professor at BU, mine as a freelance writer of biographies and then as a professor of creative writing at Emerson College—were far apart.

We met again at the celebration of Margaret Fuller's bicentennial in 2010 for a conference at the Massachusetts Historical Society called "Margaret Fuller and Her Circles." Charlie was one of the instigators. By then I was at work on my own biography, and a curator of a concurrent exhibition on the women of the American Renaissance, which included several items relating to Fuller from my own collection—a print of the Piazza Barberini where she'd lived as a journalist and young mother separated from her son through much of the Roman Revolution, and a portrait engraving. I was beginning to feel I might be able to contribute to Fuller studies, as well. I hoped for Charlie's approval.

I can't say I ever got it directly. My book had such different aims. But I knew I'd achieved his respect when we collaborated on solving a manuscript mystery in 2017. Really, the mystery went farther back than that.

In writing the final scenes of my book in 2011, I went in search of a document Charlie cited in his Volume Two, "H Thoreau's Notes" on the shipwreck—an ample accounting Thoreau had made after journeying, at Emerson's bidding, to Fire Island where the ship *Elizabeth* had gone down in a storm, drowning Fuller and her husband and toddler son. Charlie located the document in the Boston Public Library. I scoured the Fuller papers at the BPL, and any possibly related collections—the archives of her early biographers Thomas Wentworth Higginson and William Henry Channing. The Special Collections librarian insisted they had nothing of the kind: they'd certainly know of any Thoreau manuscripts, and the Fuller collection's finding aids were up to date. I wrote to Charlie—What was this document? Could he help me out? His own notes were long since packed away in storage, he said. He promised to look when he next had a chance, though when that would be he couldn't say. I resigned myself to trusting Charlie's research—never a mistake!—and citing him, while relying on other sources I'd discovered or eyeballed myself.

Several years after my book was published, and ten years after Charlie's Volume Two, Leslie Morris of the Houghton Library called me for help in her decision to acquire ... the manuscript of Thoreau's notes on the shipwreck. Would I be able to provide some context on its significance? Could *this* manuscript have wandered from the BPL as, in earlier days, you may remember, certain precious items had famously been prone to do? No, this was one of the many passages from Thoreau's journals that were separated from his notebooks and tipped into six hundred copies of the so-called "manuscript edition" of his journals as a sales gimmick back in 1906. This document had been pasted into Copy One and remained there ever since. But the news made me—and Charlie—all the more determined to figure out what had happened in the BPL. He wracked his brains and recalled that the document he'd seen wasn't in Thoreau's hand. It had been a transcription done, he speculated, by the Emersons' family friend Elizabeth Hoar. Ah! I checked back with the BPL—Could the manuscript have been relocated? Yes. There it was, filed under Elizabeth Hoar, its connection to Thoreau and Fuller no longer part of its catalog description. (This has since been remedied.) When I delivered the good news, Charlie responded with typical qualifications—"I should add that my identification of Elizabeth Hoar as the creator of the copy of HDT's notes is by no means certain. It's an educated guess based largely on ... my familiarity with EH's hand and the fact that she often transcribed copy for MF and RWE for use in the DIAL." Long ago, when he was on the premises doing research,

Remembering Bell Chevigny

Brigitte Bailey

Like many young scholars in the late 1980s, I was excited by Bell's *The Woman and the Myth*, by its subject matter and unorthodox method, which alternated between Fuller's texts and her biography. Bell's feminist recovery work with Fuller's mangled manuscripts was inspiring. Not long after that, I happened to sit at the same table at a conference where Bell and Larry Reynolds discussed forming the Fuller Society (a prized memory!). I ran into Bell throughout the 1990s, from Fritz Fleischmann's wonderful Fuller conference in 1995, to MLA meetings, to the 1998 Hawthorne Society conference in Rome where the MFS had a presence. Bell was outgoing, interested in everything, and generous—saying nice things in Rome about both my paper and my daughter, who attended the reception in her stroller. She was unfailingly optimistic, a trait I have come to admire more and more the older I get.

In planning the first Transatlantic Women conference (2008), I and my co-organizers, Beth Lueck and Cindy Damon-Bach, invited Bell to be a keynote speaker, but by this time her mobility had become an issue, and she was unable to come to Oxford. She did, however, agree to write a marvelous autobiographical essay for a special Fuller issue of *Nineteenth-Century Prose* (2015). As guest editor, I was lucky in the contributors, who included two other scholars we've recently lost: Jeff Steele and Charlie Capper. Indeed, Charlie's and Bell's essays served as the bookends of the set. Bell's piece, "Forty Years with Margaret Fuller," describes Fuller as a touchstone during decades of engagement with evolving literary and political theories and activism—in feminism, Marxism, sexuality, prisoners' rights, and trans-American writing. As she puts it (I'll let Bell have the last word), "Privately I sometimes fancy that [Fuller] and I are a double helix spiraling around these lively years. This period has dynamically altered the figure Fuller cuts and has changed my political and intellectual life as well. My forty-years' love affair with Margaret Fuller has often been broken off, but it fires up again as she reappears—or I seek her—in new guise."

Charlie must have mentioned this theory to a BPL librarian, who took his word as definitive, even though Charlie himself would not have.

The last time we met was in 2016, on the set of a documentary about Margaret Fuller, on a day when we were both to be filmed answering questions that would provide the documentary's narration. We were partners in this enterprise, even as we brought different perspectives to the project. It was a hot summer day, and the film makers had chosen an antique farmhouse museum west of Boston as the location for the interviews. We sweltered as the makeup crew slathered our faces, and in my case teased my hair and applied mascara, removed my glasses and draped a scarf around my neck. We sweltered some more in the upstairs rooms, windows shut against any interfering noise, where we were interviewed. And as we left, we exchanged sheepish smiles. Neither of us had felt good about attempting to cram our multitudinous subject into sound bites.

The film was completed last year, and given a title Charlie might not have approved, considering his differences with Larry Reynolds: *Margaret Fuller: Transatlantic Revolutionary*. When I viewed it, I was favorably impressed, but I could scarcely recognize myself. Charlie was very much Charlie, dapper in his smartly tailored jacket, calmly offering his thoughts in well-turned sentences, seemingly not at all rattled by the circumstances, telling of the woman to whom he'd devoted his career, a woman, he said, "who lived with the tension between culture and politics," who joined the "struggle for American democracy and to determine to what extent it would live up to the promise that had been offered by the founders," and who in the end had been caught up in a "world historical movement" uniting American abolitionists and freedom fighters in Europe.

When I think of Charlie now, I remember Margaret Fuller's letter to her friend William Henry Channing, written the day she completed her great work, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*—"I felt a delightful glow," she wrote, "as if I had put a good deal of my true life in it, as if, suppose I went away now, the measure of my foot-print would be left on the earth." Charlie's biography of Margaret Fuller is such a work as well, one by which we can measure the extent of his influence, sure to last as long as Fuller herself is known, recognized, heralded, and heeded.

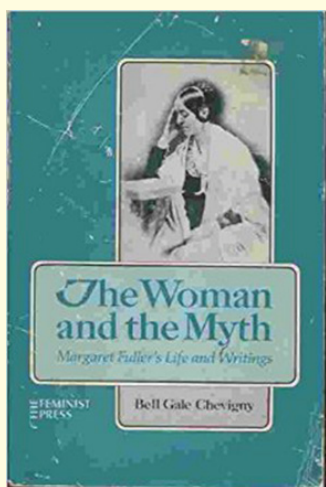
A Tribute to Bell Gale Chevigny: The Woman and the Myth

Larry J. Reynolds

Based on a talk given at the American Literature Association Conference in 2016, slightly revised in light of her death in November 2021.

It was my pleasure to participate in honoring Bell Chevigny on the 40th anniversary of the publication of *The Woman and The Myth: Margaret Fuller's Life and Writings*.

It's difficult to overemphasize the importance of that book in the resurgence of interest in the work of Fuller in



the years that followed. When the revised and expanded edition came out in 1994, one reader for the press wrote, "Since its first publication, Bell Chevigny's study has achieved almost classic status as the finest book ever written about this nineteenth-century author. The originality, insight, and brilliance of Chevigny's study have influenced all subsequent Fuller scholarship." My own work on Fuller and that of my students

were tremendously influenced by Bell's book. Her work, in fact, inspired me to feature Fuller in my study, *European Revolutions and the American Renaissance*, which came out in 1988.

Bell and I were friends for almost thirty years. We first met in the summer of 1992 in Concord, Massachusetts at the biannual Nathaniel Hawthorne Society Conference. I distinctly remember how much she disagreed with my paper, which argued that Fuller's presence in Concord in the summer of 1844 troubled the Emersons' and Hawthornes' marriages. Despite that initial disagreement, we enjoyed one another's company and at dinner discussed forming a Margaret Fuller Society, a discussion Briggs Bailey recently told me she heard while sitting at our table. Subsequently, at the 1992 MLA, Bell chaired an organizational meeting that got us underway. She agreed to serve as the Society's first president and recruit members, and I agreed to write our by-laws, edit a newsletter, and arrange conference panels. It was an exciting moment.

One myth about Bell, held by her many admirers, is that she and Margaret Fuller were much alike. It's true that the degree of similarity is striking, but so are the differences. Both were powerful intellectual women, passionate activists, beloved teachers, and gifted writers. Their efforts on behalf of women's rights and human rights were ardent and effective, and their concerns were international in scope. Moreover, their success as journalists, as well as scholars, made them well known public intellectuals. I distinctly remember when Bell gave her keynote address at the historic 1995 Babson conference organized by Fritz Fleischman, I happened to run into the distinguished Americanist Lawrence Buell in the hallway, and a bit surprised, I asked him if he had abandoned the Emerson crowd and was now working on Fuller. He soberly replied, "Why no, but I had to come hear Bell Gale Chevigny speak." The hushed respect in his voice made it seem as if he was anticipating listening to Fuller herself.

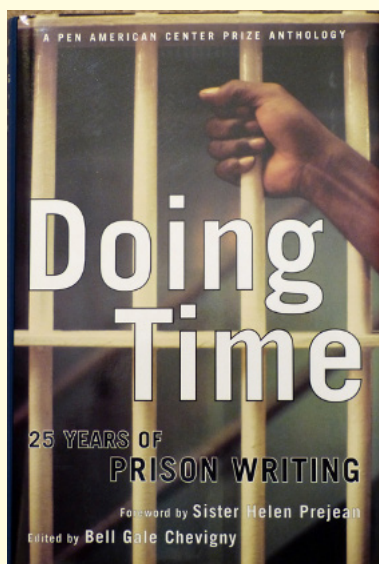
Bell, in an essay published in the fall 2015 special issue of *Nineteenth-Century Prose*, edited by Briggs, provides a wonderful narrative of what she calls her forty-years' love affair with Margaret Fuller, focusing on the challenge that identifying with Fuller presented to her as a feminist biographer. Bell explains that she finally overcame male insistence upon so-called "objectivity" by realizing that there is "a way of engaging our identification with our subjects with so little qualification or inhibition that one [can] emerge at the far side of the experience with a greater clarity than usually accompanies 'objectivity.'" The key, as Bell states, is to make use of intuitive understanding while keeping in mind the historical differences between the biographer's situation and that of her subject. In *The Woman and The Myth*, Bell succeeds at this marvelously, making the book such a penetrating combination of voices, Bell's and Margaret's. There's been nothing like it since.

The historical differences between Bell and Fuller for the most part favor Bell. For example, Fuller, as we know, despite being far more brilliant than most of her male Harvard-educated friends, was prevented from attending that institution or any other of its like. She even had to talk her way into the privilege of using Harvard's library to research *Summer on the Lakes, in 1843*. Bell, on the other hand, not only attended two of America's finest colleges, earning her B.A. from Wellesley and her M.A. and Ph. D. from Yale, but she went on to teach as a professor at Queen's College, Sarah Lawrence College, and SUNY at Purchase. When she retired, they named a feminist essay prize in her honor, the Bell Chevigny Prize. Somewhat ironically, Bell made free use of the Houghton Library

at Harvard to do research for her book on Fuller, whose unpublished materials are housed there.

Fuller was almost thirty before she found a suitable vocation and source of income with her Boston Conversations and editing of the *Dial*, but her engagement in antebellum social reform movements was reluctant and noticeably class conscious. She remained detached from the abolitionists in the early 1840s, finding them too fanatical in their rhetoric and activities, and it wasn't until she joined Greeley's *New-York Tribune* at the age of 34 and revised "The Great Lawsuit" into *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* that her outlook shifted noticeably. Even on the *Tribune* in NYC, however, she didn't totally abandon the ideal of self-culture. After lamenting the existence of slavery in the United States, she asserted in 1845 that "in private lives, more than in public measures must the salvation of the country lie." In Italy, her outlook shifted more radically, at least Bell and I have argued that it did.

Bell lived in New York City while teaching at Queen's College in the early 1960s and displayed no reluctance to go public with her political engagement. As she writes in her reflective essay, "We marched against bomb-shelters and nuclear testing" and were thrust into the civil rights movement. She published essays on civil rights, the Vietnam War, community organizing, and prisoners' education, mostly in *The Village Voice* and later in *The Nation* and *The Socialist Review*.



We know that Fuller visited the women inmates at Sing Sing Prison and had friends in Boston send them books and moral support. When Bell left Queens College for Sarah Lawrence, she actually taught male prisoners at night at the Westchester County Penitentiary and later joined the PEN Prison Writing Project, helping prisoners not only write but preserve their dignity and humanity. In 1999

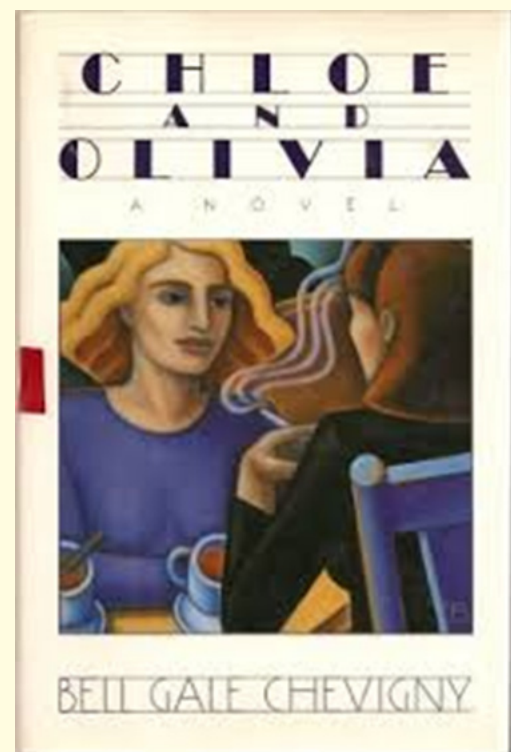
Bell published her edited anthology, *Doing Time: 25 Years of Prison Writing*, and she continued to work with prisoners and to work to end the death penalty.

Once, when Bell came to visit in College Station, Texas, I arranged for her to give a talk and meet some colleagues

and students, but her main request, after arriving, was for me to arrange a visit to the Huntsville Federal Prison, where she wished to see some death-row prisoners, friends of hers, she said. I confess I had no desire to go with her, but I did secure her transportation. She was fearless as well as brilliant!

While Fuller as a journalist traveled across the Atlantic to Europe, which was soon rocked by social unrest and revolution, Bell and her husband Paul traveled to South America, namely Argentina and Brazil, writing *America's Watch* reports in the 1990s, documenting police violence, torture, and killings. Complementing this work, Bell also helped initiate the transnational turn in American literary study by co-editing, with Gari LaGuardia, the collection *Reinventing the Americas: Comparative Studies of North and Latin American Literature*, published by Cambridge University Press in 1986!

Fuller had a strong creative side, as anyone knows who has read her poetry, which Jeffrey Steele collected in his anthology and wrote about so insightfully. Fuller also wrote several mystical short pieces, including "The Magnolia of Lake Pontchartrain," "Yuca Filamentosa," and "Leila." Bell, on the other hand, has written short stories, including the award-winning "Maggie's Dress," but she also authored a novel, a genre that Fuller, like the other transcendentalists, eschewed.

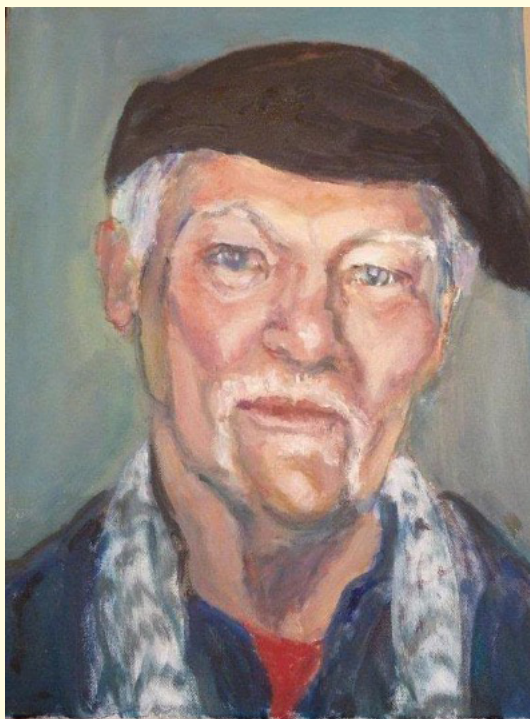


Bell's *Chloe and Olivia*, published by Grove Press in 1990, follows the friendship between the two title characters over some fourteen years, beginning with their meeting

in Rome as graduate students in 1961. Chloe becomes a single, politically engaged New Yorker, while Olivia marries a handsome artist, has a daughter, and lives in Oregon. The friendship survives through the struggles of both women, with abortion, illness, the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, and the women's movement, and with marriage, infidelity, divorce, and single parenting. The friends fight. They go silent. They make up and their friendship survives. In the novel, Bell illuminates the erotic dimensions of straight women's friendships, a topic that fascinated her for years with regard to Fuller.

When Fuller arrived in Italy in 1847, she not only befriended and promoted American artists, but even fell in love with one, as Bell was the first scholar to discover. The artist was the young Thomas Hicks, whose painting of Fuller Bell discovered in the Houghton Library, and she published for the first time in her biography the ardent letter Fuller wrote to Hicks. Bell points out that the letter, written after Fuller met Ossoli, exploded the myth that Fuller's feelings for Ossoli were love at first sight. As Bell discusses in her book, "During the siege of Rome, Hicks painted her portrait; after her death, he refused to part with it or her letters, which he told Ellen Channing were 'sacredly confidential.'"

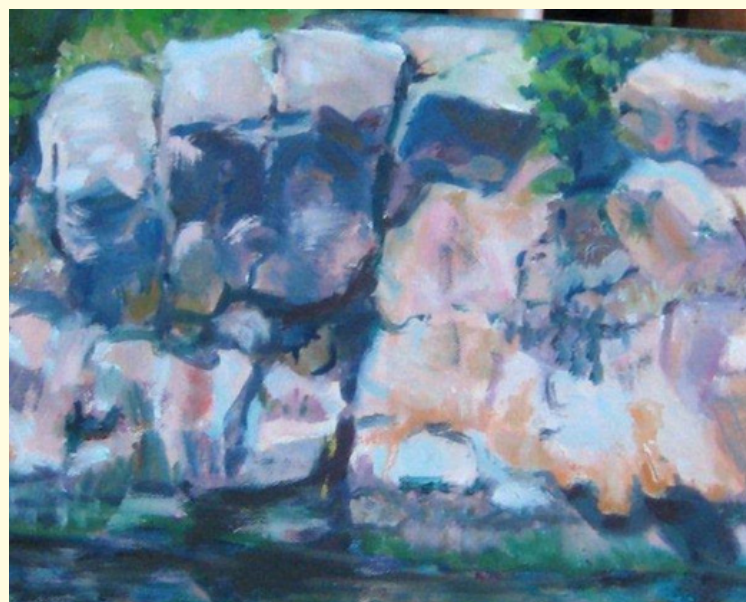
While Fuller and Bell's character Olivia found artists enthralling, Bell herself was an accomplished artist. She shared images of some of her paintings with me, and gave me permission to share them with others. Here are a few:



Chuck Culhane; poet, ex-con, and Bell's friend



Bell's elder daughter Katy, "who absolutely did not want to sit for me."



Rocks across the river from Bell and Paul's cabin on the St. Lawrence River. Bell felt that the rocks looked like knuckles of a hand.

Obviously, Bell had skills that Fuller in her short life did not acquire. Yet, there's something wonderful and remarkable about Fuller's inspiring Bell to become the unique and accomplished individual she was in her own right. I feel honored to have been her friend and colleague, and I miss her greatly.

Joel Myerson: “Pass It On!”

Daniel Shealy

On a chilly evening in November 2021, Joel Myerson and I enjoyed a long dinner with Megan Marshall at the Colonial Inn in Concord, Massachusetts. It was good to catch up with old friends, neither of whom I had seen in over two years because of the COVID-19 pandemic. We talked some about the past, the good times we had spent together, and about our current projects, but mostly we talked of the future. We made a plan to get together again in July 2022, when we all would be in town for an NEH seminar. Two weeks later, Joel Myerson would die suddenly from a massive heart attack while enjoying lunch at Edisto Island, South Carolina.

Joel was a prolific scholar of nineteenth-century American literature, but more important, he was a kind, empathetic, generous person. Working on my PhD at the University of South Carolina, I vividly recall a scene that revealed much about Joel as a teacher and as a person. Walking past a TA's office one summer mid-afternoon, I noticed Joel sitting beside the student's desk going through his dissertation—a descriptive bibliography—page by page. When I dropped by my office at about 9 pm to pick up some papers, Joel was still in that student's office. His dedication to the student's work impressed me. I knew then that I wanted to work with him. Little did I realize that that relationship would blossom into a friendship of almost forty years. I learned much from Joel over the years, but most of all I recall his belief that a scholar's job was to “pass it on.” He was always willing to share his knowledge, his work-in-progress with others.

That passion for sharing came home to me again in Concord, as we spent five days that November working together in the town's library, researching our different projects. As most people who knew him are aware, Joel loved books, and he had put together impressive collections of Emerson, Dickinson, Whitman, and Fuller. Always on the lookout for rare books, Joel never went to Concord without stopping by the Barrow Bookstore, tucked away on a side street downtown. Typically, nothing caught his eye until the clerk said, “Well, this just arrived. You might be interested in it.”

On this occasion, the volume was *The Duties of Women* (1881) by Frances Powers Cobbe, a leading social reformer and woman's suffrage campaigner in Great Britain. Joel carefully inspected the small book and was delighted; he said he thought that it would be an excellent addition to his Margaret Fuller collection.

The pandemic had slowed his rare book hunts. When we met for dinner that early November, it looked as if the pandemic were beginning to fade. Perhaps by the spring, masks could be forgotten, we all thought. Joel also was looking forward to completing his work on the account books of Emerson, volumes that detail all monies the author earned and spent throughout his career, the project that had brought him to Concord. But he was also enjoying the present moment.

What made Joel's book find even more special was the inscription on the front wrapper. Scrawled across the top, in the unmistakable handwriting of Louisa May Alcott, was the following: “Mrs. Blanchard with Miss Alcott's regards. Please read & lend.” Or, as Joel would say, “Pass it on!”



Joel Myerson: He Kept the Conversation Going

Phyllis Cole, Past President



I first made contact with Joel in the late seventies, when he heard of a small editing project I had under way and wrote to ask if I might submit it to his new annual, *Studies in the American Renaissance*. I gladly went along with that idea. But Joel's outreach to others never stopped with academic networking. Along the way, he also asked if I (who then lived in

Concord) wanted to join a dinner party he had organized for the week of the Thoreau Gathering. I gladly went along with that idea, too. But then, after a few years of such restaurant meetings, he proposed that pizza and beer at my house—paid for by guests, of course—would be much better for getting people together. Why hadn't I thought of that? So for several years in the 1980s I hosted a group of scholars who have been my friends ever since, with Joel at the heart of it. The real community that exists today among those who study Transcendentalism is substantially his legacy. (photo credit: Greta Little)

What's more, from those early days, Margaret Fuller stood as a central voice among the Transcendentalists as Joel was recreating them, very much in resistance to what had been an exclusionary Emerson-Thoreau field. While Bell Chevigny was bringing Fuller's feminism to life, Joel focused on Fuller *The Dial* editor, as well as collecting essays about her from 1840 through the twentieth century. Both his book on *The Dial* and his *Critical Essays on Margaret Fuller* came out in 1980. Joel pulled together an interactive community in the historical content of his Transcendentalist studies, as well as the personal style of his career. In 1992, Larry Reynolds took a lead in forming the Margaret Fuller Society, with Bell as co-creator and first president, but Joel was also an officer from the start and soon a president as well. He has always kept the conversation going, and we will miss him sorely.

Joel Myerson, 9 September 1945–19 November 2021

Noelle A. Baker

On 19 November 2021, the Margaret Fuller Society lost an essential member of its community: Joel Myerson, Distinguished Professor Emeritus at the University of South Carolina. It is with a heavy but grateful heart that I reflect upon his life and sudden death. Joel was a cherished colleague and friend, and his absence will be felt profoundly. In addition to the landmark scholarship and leadership that shaped several fields, Joel will always be known for his matchless generosity. I know of no other scholar who has opened as many doors and presented such valuable professional advancement to so many.

Joel blazed a remarkable trail, including scholarship on Ralph Waldo Emerson and American Transcendentalism, Concord authors, textual and bibliographical studies, textual editing, and children's literature. He established and edited the journal *Studies in the American Renaissance* (1977–96), curated international exhibits, and was the author or editor of scores of books, editions, and bibliographical works. An elected member of the American Antiquarian Society (1985), Joel was the recipient of many awards, including numerous grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities (1978–81, 1988–92, 1994–97, 1997–99), the American Philosophical Society (1984–85), Guggenheim (1981–82), and Fulbright (2002, 2005). Indeed, Joel was an active and leading intellectual beacon until the day of his death, having been currently at work on several projects, among them: editing the *Account Books of Ralph Waldo Emerson* and updating his descriptive bibliographies of Emily Dickinson, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller, and Walt Whitman.

After joining the English Department at the University of South Carolina in 1971, Joel figured prominently there as a scholar, teacher, and administrator who freely bestowed his capacious intellectual and material gifts. From 1987 to 1990, he served as chair of the department, where he was also later recognized as Teacher of the Year (1997) and Faculty Mentor (1992). Moreover, and along with his partner, Greta Little, Joel placed in the university library his collection of over 11,000 volumes of nineteenth-century American literature and their joint collection of international children's literature.

Notably, Joel amplified and made accessible the writing of women, among them, Margaret Fuller, Emily Dickinson, and Louisa May Alcott. His work was foundational

in recuperating the reputation and writings of Fuller. He was likewise remarkable for “The Politics of Editing,” a 1990 presidential address at the annual meeting of the Association of Documentary Editing (ADE) that underscores the necessity of recovering the works of Black and female writers. Thirty-one years after its delivery, “The Politics of Editing” speaks presciently to our own cultural moment. Emphasizing in that article that “virtually everything we do as editors is in some way political,” Joel promotes the importance of editorial ethics and diversity, and their significance for textbooks, the canon, and readers.

The ADE is composed of scholars engaged in the recovery of primary source materials and cultural artifacts—largely historians, but also librarians, archivists, musicologists, and textual scholars from literature, philosophy, and science. Since its founding in 1978, only six literary editors have been elected president. Joel was the first. As the current representative of that diminutive group, I can speak to the challenges and rewards of interdisciplinary leadership, but Joel’s version makes intellectual integration look easy, friendly, and fun. Moreover, he extended that active guidance to numerous societies and scholarly organizations. He undertook significant governance positions within the Modern Language Association and served as president of the Philological Association of the Carolinas, the Thoreau Society, the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society, the Margaret Fuller Society, and the Louisa May Alcott Society.

In a testimony to this outstanding pattern of leadership, the ADE recognized him repeatedly, including the bestowal of its highest honor: the Julian P. Boyd Award (2016), shared with his dear friend and colleague Ronald A. Bosco. Joel was also the first literary editor to win the Lyman H. Butterfield Award (1995) for his scholarship, teaching, and service, and he was likewise granted the Distinguished Service Award (1986) to honor his successful efforts to attain affiliate status with the MLA and his ongoing committee work for the ADE since its inception.

On the day of Joel’s death, I reached out to a number of ADE members to convey the sad news personally, and a common thread immediately emerged, highlighting his commanding knowledge, deep generosity, playful skill as a raconteur, and outsized presence in any room. As one long-time ADE member and former president observed aptly: “He was the soul and essence of the ADE.”

Speaking for myself, I will always remember Joel at the dinner table or a pub booth, regaling friends and colleagues with his keen wit and sharp insights into his deep and wide-ranging interests—from craft beer to international travel, academic politics, rare books, account books, and American literature.

Despite his prominent stature, Joel treated all with respect, and with a unique willingness to enable the work of emerging scholars. In an early encounter with Joel as a graduate student, I cautiously approached him in a conference elevator with an idea. Joel dispelled my hesitation quickly by listening patiently, even jotting a few lines in his pocket-notebook. I was not his student, but thereafter he repeatedly extended advice, encouragement, letters of reference, and archival leads, and he continued to offer professional opportunities at every stage of my career, perhaps most notably after I left my university to become an independent scholar. On one occasion and precisely because of my unaffiliated status, I was required to produce a letter of support in order to gain admission to work in a prestigious special collections library. Little did I know that I was about to witness a classic Myerson put-down in defense of my professional standing. Joel composed a politely scathing missive, prefaced by a refusal to confer the dignity of title or even name upon the addressee and institutional head. “Dear librarian,” he began dismissively, before enumerating my credentials as a textual scholar and implying further that only a fool could imagine “Dr. Baker” mishandling the repository’s precious manuscripts.

The last email I received from Joel—just a few weeks before his death—exemplified his friendship. I hadn’t asked for help, but he had become aware that I might need it, and empathy was one of the gifts of his friendship. I am profoundly saddened by Joel’s loss but also immensely grateful to have been granted the privilege of his company, kindness, and wisdom.

