



# MARGARET FULLER SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

## Fuller Society Special Session at 1998 MLA Convention

The following session sponsored by the Fuller Society was held December 28 at the 1998 MLA Convention in San Francisco:

### Margaret Fuller and the "Revolutions" of 1848

Chair: Jeffrey Steele

Phyllis Cole, "Persisting to Ask: Margaret Fuller and Elizabeth Cady Stanton."

Annamaria Formichella, "'This Great Rich Suffering World': Margaret Fuller and the Nineteenth-Century Body Politic."

Sandra Gustafson, "Silence on the Border: The American '48 in Fuller's European Writings."

The proposal for this session, written by Jeffrey Steele, appears on page 3 of this **Newsletter**.

## Fuller Sessions at 1998 ALA Conference

At the 1998 Conference of the American Literature Association held in San Diego, two Fuller Society sessions were held:

### Teaching Margaret Fuller

Chair: Larry J. Reynolds

Jan Little, "Fuller's Electric Women: Science, Spirituality, and the Feminine."

Laurie James, "Making Fuller Known to the Public."

Judith Strong Albert, "'I Feel As I Would Truly—A Teacher and a Guide.'"

### Fuller as Teacher

Chair: Robert Hudspeth

Scott E. Gac, "The Eternal Symphony Afloat: The Transcendentalists' Quest for a National Culture."

Laraine Fergenson, "What We Can Learn from Margaret Fuller's Students."

Deshae Lott, "Fuller's Teaching Premises: Know Thyself; Love Thy Neighbor."

## Fuller Session at 1999 MLA Convention

At the 1999 Conference of the American Literature Association to be held in Baltimore, Maryland, May 27-30, one Fuller Society session will be held:

### Margaret Fuller and Transcendentalism

Chair: Deshae Lott

Cynthia J. Davis, "Margaret Fuller, Body and Soul."

Joseph C. Schöpp, "The Metamorphic Self: Margaret Fuller's Multiple M's."

Bruce Mills, "'Apprehensive Genius': Margaret Fuller and the Science of Sympathy."

## Fuller Special Issue of *ESQ*

The editor of *ESQ: A Journal of the American Renaissance* announces the publication of a special issue on Margaret Fuller. The issue, which will appear in early 1999 and is still available to new subscribers, features the following contributions: "The Nineteenth-Century Women's Rights Movement and the Canonization of Margaret Fuller," by Phyllis Cole; "'A Commanding View': Vision and the Problem of Nationality in Fuller's *Summer on the Lakes*," by Anne Baker; "Margaret Fuller's Visions," by Mary-Jo Haronian; and "'A Presence among Us': Fuller's Place in Nineteenth-Century Oratorical Culture," by Judith Mattson Bean. For information about subscribing, please contact Jerry Brown at (509) 335-4795 or brownjl@wsu.edu; Fuller Society members are entitled to a 20 percent discount on subscriptions.

## Fullerini in Rome, June 1998

### A Special Dispatch to the *Fuller Society Newsletter*

Bell Gale Chevigny

["Give us a dispatch from Rome," our editor urges, "about the conference and your wanderings. Feel free to digress as much as Margaret did."]

The Nathaniel Hawthorne Society gave a lucky four dozen a marvelous pretext for catching the Roman spring. The hospitable rubric of its June 2-5 conference, "Nineteenth-Century Americans in Rome: Cultural Encounters," made possible four sessions on Hawthorne, two each on James and Fuller, and singles on Melville, art, gender, and the like. There were three distinguished keynoters—Sergio Perosa, Millicent Bell, and John Carlos Rowe—and a range of European participants. Past-president of the Hawthorne Society, Walter Herbert, had found conference space in John Cabot University in Trastevere. President-elect Robert K. Martin outdid himself in making sure we were not deprived of the city, arranging the first evening in the distinguished Centro Studi Americani in the Roman ghetto, a final banquet in a restaurant garden, two walking tours, and a lunch in the impressive bookstore Bibli. (Some of us also visited Tempo Retrovato, the feminist bookstore down the narrow Via dei Fienaroli.)

President of the Hawthorne Society, Larry Reynolds, arranged for six strong papers to be presented by the Fuller Society: Thomas Mitchell, "Hawthorne and the Venus of the Tribune," Joan Von Mehren, "Mapping her Life in the *City of Soul*," Deshae Lott, "Margaret Fuller and European Catholicism," Charles Capper, "Between Culture and Ideology: the Romantic Feminism of Margaret Fuller," Brigitte Bailey, "Fuller, Hawthorne, and Imagining Urban Spaces in Rome," and me, "'A Woman Anxious to Try All Things': Hawthorne and Fuller Revisited."

Discussion spilled into the tangled streets of Trastevere, the once-bohemian quarter of Rome, now startlingly prosperous and clean, every facade being washed for the Jubilee. Cafés offered frullatte, wine, and espressi. Fragolini, miniature strawberries soaked in wine, were in season, as were the carciofi alla giudea perfected in the ghetto, artichokes so tender you can eat them whole, deep-fried "Jewish" style. Gelato waited around every corner. Brigitte had brought along her sister and her four-year-old daughter Wei. With a stroller and constant ice-cream, she says, they were able to go almost everywhere. Deshae and I, with her mother and roommate Nicki and my husband Paul, traveled

in style in wheelchairs to see the witty statue of the dialect poet Trilussa, whom Fuller would surely have admired. Skies were bright, not yet torrid. "Hawthorne hated Rome, he hated the rain," Tom Mitchell kept telling his wife, Linda. But we were spared.

The Hawthorneans had their walking-tours (see "Hawthorne's Rome" by Brenda Wineapple in the *New York Times* travel section, November 1, 1998) and thanks to Joan von Mehren, who had secured a Murray's 1852 map of Rome and marked out sites, we Fullerini had ours. Though Joan had spent many months in Rome studying Fuller, she had not tracked down all her addresses until later. As I had not been in Rome since the 60s (when, oblivious of Fuller, I was misspending my youth writing a dissertation on Conrad), I was keen to join her explorations. I'd been dismayed to find the little street off the Via Flaminia where I had lived demolished for a tennis club. Abandoning pursuit of my past, I turned to Fuller's.

In 1849, Fuller wrote that she was in the Piazza Barberini house which Hans Christian Andersen had described: "Ah, what human companionship here, how everything speaks!" A shopkeeper we met there felt differently ("If it's about history, I couldn't care less"), but with an etching of Andersen's house, we easily found the assymetric facade behind the Triton fountain.

From her window, Fuller had written, she saw a mob massing at the Pope's palace uphill to the right and Prince Barberini's carriage rushing through his palace gate up to the left. Yet, from her doorway, both buildings are now blocked by massive walls. Could Fuller have been exaggerating her view for dramatic effect? We ended by deconstructing the walls—a passing nun kindly confirmed that they were not a century old—and thus restored Fuller's view of palace gate and Quirinale.

Near the Campo di Fiori, we found the Ossoli palace where Angelo lived with his sister, transformed recently into headquarters of the European Union. Later, personally led by an enthusiastic researcher from the State Archives, Joan found what had been Fuller's home at Via del Corso 514 (all the street numbers had been changed) very near the Piazza del Popolo.

Meanwhile, Deshae tracked Fuller into St. Peter's. "The opulence of statues and portraits of popes could not distract me from imagining Fuller," she recalls, "how she lost the Springs in the cathedral, how she could have enjoyed that place for prayer because it was so private despite its spaciousness, and how Ossoli—like the Italians who carried me up the flight of steps at the entrance—would so readily

have volunteered to escort a wandering woman wherever she wanted to go.”

Charles Capper and I had both found rooms high on the Janicolo, at the beautiful American Academy in Rome (mine on a courtyard of cypresses, where a bird sang gloriously at five a.m.—perhaps a nightingale, immortal bird.) Fuller had lodged nearby before the fall of the Roman Republic. At an Academy concert in the rarely-opened Villa Aurelia that commands a spectacular view of the city, Charlie, immersed in revolutionary history for his biography, reminded me that Garibaldi and his men had occupied that very villa for their final battle.

With Fuller’s letters in hand, Paul and I had pursued her beyond Rome, arriving in May in order to travel into the Abruzzi mountains in the same month that she had, pregnant, 150 years before. We found no donkeys, but poppies still enamel the fields and the chief excitement in charming tourist-free L’Aquila is the passeggiata, the evening stroll. But the sight of girls driving mopeds while talking on cellphones kept us in our moment.

In largely modern Rieti, we found two old houses with galleries hanging over the willow-lined river and a view of the bridge and the road from Rome that matched her account of lodgings where she bore Angelino. The bridge was modern, but some mallards sunning themselves drew our eyes to the ruins of an ancient bridge below. It was in that quiet retreat that I felt Fuller’s presence most strongly.

She eluded us in Florence. We walked in the Cascine, the park along the Arno where Fuller had aired her baby while keeping an eye out for spies and traitors. No Hussars, no elegant ladies. We sat in Piazza Santa Maria Novella wondering, clueless, in which house the little family had made their exile. Had she really been there at all? Then I noticed that the hotel across the square is called Minerva. I sensed Margaret’s Transcendental wink.

### **1998 MLA Special Session Proposal: Margaret Fuller and the “Revolutions” of 1848**

Jeffrey Steele

In her paper, “Persisting to Ask: Margaret Fuller and Elizabeth Cady Stanton,” Phyllis Cole considers Fuller and Stanton as two of the founding intellects of the emerging women’s movement. Very few Fuller scholars and virtually no specialists on the Woman’s Rights movement have examined this connection. As a result, no one (before Cole) has noticed that—in her first speech—Stanton quoted without attribution the poem that Fuller used to conclude *Woman*

*in the Nineteenth Century*. Similarly, no one has pursued the implications of Stanton’s admission, late in life, that she “knew and admired” Fuller, that she met her in 1843 (the year Fuller wrote her feminist essay, “The Great Lawsuit”), and that she enjoyed “many of [Fuller’s] conversations.” Linking Fuller’s texts to material in the Stanton paper records of the Boston feminist-abolitionists, Cole discusses the intersecting rhetorical designs and ideologies of these two founding feminists.

Annamaria Formichella’s paper, “‘This Great, Rich, Suffering World’: Margaret Fuller and the Nineteenth-Century Body Politic,” links Fuller to the European revolutions of 1848. As a European correspondent for the *New-York Tribune* between 1846 and 1850, Fuller witnessed first-hand the turbulent changes taking place in France and Italy. Building on Larry J. Reynolds’s groundbreaking research in *European Revolutions and the American Literary Renaissance*, Formichella considers the role that Fuller plays in the nineteenth century’s construction of nationhood. She argues that Fuller used her discussions of the Italian uprising (the Risorgimento) as a lens through which to assess the vicissitudes of American democracy, especially as the discourse of national transformation related to that of gender reform. Providing a model of revolutionary change, the popular movement of the Italian people functioned for Fuller as a powerful model of democracy in action, challenging her readers in America to achieve equivalent forms of political action and social freedom.

In “Silence on the Border: The American ’48 in Fuller’s European Writings,” Sandra Gustafson shifts the focus by examining Fuller’s account of the Italian Revolution, not in terms of United States’ reform, but in connection to U.S.-Mexican relations. Although Fuller opposed both the annexation of Texas and the ensuing Mexican War (which ended in 1848), she did not see in Mexico the same republican spirit that she saw in Italy and hoped to revive in the United States. Gustafson links this blindspot to Fuller’s vision of an ideal “America,” which—in her European dispatches—became more a state of mind (found, for example, in Italy) than an actual nation-state. Although it operated as a powerful ideal, Fuller’s vision of a disembodied “America” effectively displaced the complex ironies and tensions of new world republicanism that informed the conflict between the United States and Mexico. As a result, it was difficult for her to conceptualize an “American” geography that fully recognized Mexico as a sister republic victimized by United States imperialist aggression.

## Hawthorne's Fuller Mystery

The University of Massachusetts Press announces the publication of *Hawthorne's Fuller Mystery* by Thomas R. Mitchell. This book explores the deeply emotional yet enigmatic relationship between the two nineteenth-century American writers, showing how Margaret Fuller's radical ideas about women's rights, equality of the sexes, and the nature of marriage influenced Nathaniel Hawthorne's writing.

Drawing on recently published letters and journals, Mitchell describes how Julian Hawthorne's misrepresentation of his father's relationship with Fuller destroyed her literary reputation, promoted Hawthorne as a defender of conservative values, and continues to obscure the depth of Hawthorne's personal and intellectual involvement with her. Mitchell concludes that far from being repulsed by Fuller and her assertiveness—as many scholars have claimed—Hawthorne experienced with her perhaps the most intimate relationship that he ever had with a woman, his wife alone excepted.

The *Kirkus Reviews* reports that the book is “an impressive achievement” that “captures the fiery temperament of each while also untangling their complicated friendship and its literary import.”

The book is available at a 20% discount to Fuller Society members by calling (413) 545-2219.

## Capper's Current Work

Charles Capper is completing the last chapter of the second volume of his biography of Margaret Fuller (she's now in Italy!), which will be published by Oxford University Press. He recently published the essay “‘A Little Beyond’: The Problem of the Transcendentalist Movement in American History” in *The Journal of American History* 85 (September 1998): 502-539. Capper also has in press a collection of essays on the Transcendentalist movement, based on a recent conference sponsored by the Massachusetts Historical Society. The collection, co-edited with Conrad Wright, includes an essay on Fuller, Emerson, and feminism by Phyllis Cole and will be published in 1999 by the Massachusetts Historical Society and Northeastern University Press.

In the spring of 1999, Capper is chairing a session at the Organization of American Historians meeting in Toronto on the Transcendentalist movement. The session will include papers by Phyllis Cole on Fuller, by Dean Grodzins on Transcendentalism, anti-Catholicism, and Theodore Parker's 28th Congregational Society, and by Alfred von Frank on Transcendentalism and antislavery. Daniel Walker Howe will serve as commentator.

## Eyewitness Account of Fuller's Death

Joel Myerson has brought to our attention a key Fuller item recently sold to an (as yet unknown) institution, described in the 1998 catalogue *The Legacy of Seneca Falls: Some Key Documents and Books in the American Women's Rights Movement* published by Priscilla Juvelis, Inc. and E. Wharton & Co. Item 25, **Affidavit by Arthur Dominy. Bay Shore, NY: 1901. \$20,000**, is a two-page handwritten document by Arthur Dominy, Life Saving Service, Office of Superintendent Third District, Bay Shore, NY: June 29, 1901, to Mrs. Anna Parker Pruyn, 13 Elk Street, Albany, NY. It tells of the shipwreck of the *Elizabeth* and relates that the bodies of Fuller and Ossoli washed ashore and were taken to New York City. There notice was given by the captain of the boat transporting the bodies to Horace Greeley, “who refused to receive them.” The captain and mate buried the bodies that night after leaving New York City at Coney Island on the way back to Bay Shore, according to Dominy. The catalogue calls this “an extraordinary document that sheds new light on American literary history.”

## Margaret Fuller Society Information

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You may enter or renew your membership in the Margaret Fuller Society by sending your dues (\$10 for faculty; \$5 for students and independent scholars) to the Margaret Fuller Society, Department of English, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas 77843.