



**Fashioning the Future: The
Fabulous Women of WNF&GA**

The First 100 Years



In the Beginning ... the 1900s

- Women's roles were limited both socially and economically – marriage, domestic or factory work, teaching
- Expanding educational opportunities opened new doors & created new dreams for women
 - Women made up 39% of all college undergraduates in 1910
- A time of momentous change for women
 - In addition to the fight for suffrage, women organized and were active in numerous causes related to the poor social, economic, and environmental conditions industrialization was creating





Ca. 1910

Miss Jane Bowne Haines

- Devout Quaker; Bryn Mawr graduate, 1891
- Traveled in Europe, visiting gardening colleges and groups
- Family background in horticulture
 - Wyck estate in PA now on National Register
- Founded Pennsylvania School of Horticulture for Women at Ambler, 1911 – only school of its kind at that time
- Instrumental in establishing WNF&GA

Educating women in gardening considered a 'daring experiment'

Woman's National Farm & Garden Association



- Preliminary meeting held at Ambler 1913
- WNF&GA established at Ambler 1914

Haines House, the white building seen here as guests arrive in 1914, today houses WNF&GA memorabilia

Louisa King

(Mrs. Francis)

- Noted gardening expert and author, called “Patron Saint of Gardening”
- First National WNF&GA president
- Also served as founder and president of Garden Clubs of America
- MI Division founded in her Alma garden, June 1926



Woman's Land Army: The Farmerettes



- Founded December 1917; more than 15,000 women placed on farms in 20 states to plow fields, drive tractors, plant and harvest crops
- Paid wages equal to male farm laborers; eight hour days
- Fascinating example of women mobilizing themselves and challenging conventional thinking about gender roles
- Continued through WWII with Victory Gardens
 - MI Division planted 2000+ VGs, raising 20,000 bushels of produce

Taking to the Fields

WILL YOU

use a hoe?
mend fences?
follow a plow?
drive a tractor?
help with the milking?
work in the orchards?
help in the hay fields?
pick in the berry patch?
harvest the small vegetables?



Initiative is the American impulse. The United States will not need the example of England to prove that women can till the soil, or the courage of the French or Canadians to prove that they can endure it.

This Spring and Summer, more than last year, girls and women in suits organized for this important war work—those of extreme wealth with those in moderate circumstances—girls from college, business, offices, city homes—will go to the country for as many weeks and months as they can. Will you help carry through?

This outfit, designed expressly by Best & Co., for women farm workers, is sold complete for 15.00. The garments may be purchased separately also.

BREECHES of khaki-colored "tough stuff." \$3.25

COAT BLOUSE—of khaki "tough stuff" also, made to wear over a shirt waist or without one; with low neck as pictured, or converted to high. \$5.75

For warmer days, the blouse comes in blue jean. \$3.95

HAT—a soft sport shape capable of many modifications, cut from khaki-colored "tough stuff" and offering ample protection from wind and sun. \$3.95

PUTTIES—are canvas with spiral lacing. \$1.25

SHOES—made on our Famous Orpic Last Patented; sturdy, but absolutely flexible. \$5.75

Camp and College Sellers, Paula A. Matzner, in Charge

Best & Co.



WLA Unit, Vermont, Wisconsin

"For many, the farmerettes were shocking at first – wearing pants! – but farmers began to rely upon the women workers."

Clara Bryant Ford

(Mrs. Henry)

- National president, 1927-35
- Dedicated, knowledgeable gardener

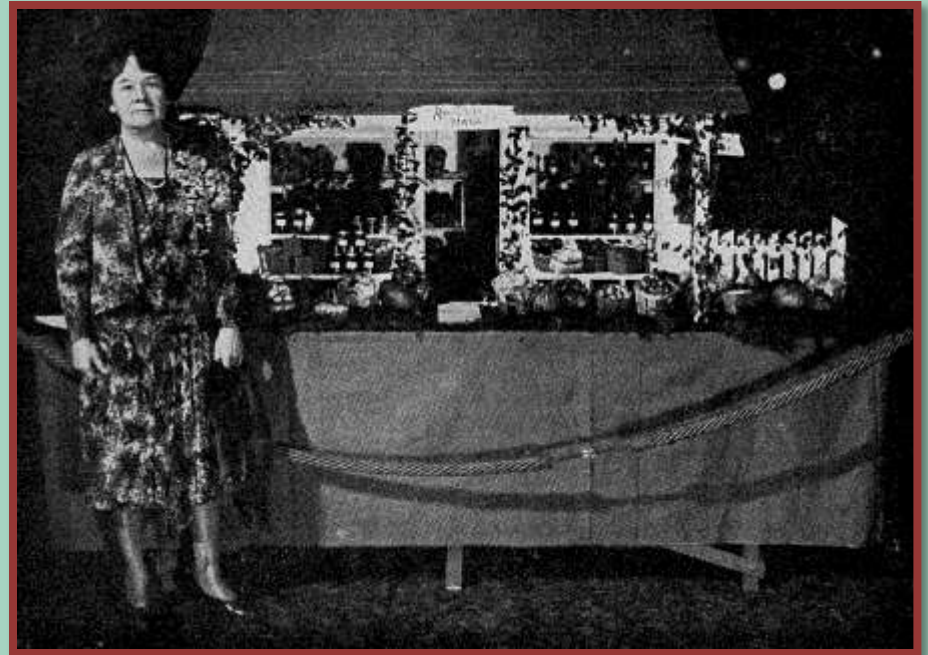


Clara in one of her gardens at Fair Lane



Clara Bryant Ford

- Introduced new WNF&GA constitution and bylaws
- Focused on marketing



- Empowered city and country women to work together

“Looking back, I may truly say that I care more for [WNF&GA] than any other for which I have worked.”

Miss Grace E. Frysinger



Ca. 1935-40

- Served as an Extension Agent at USDA
- Became great friends with Clara Ford
- Founded the Capital Division and became active at the national level of WNF&GA
- Founded the Frysinger International Exchange in 1951

The Spade & Distaff



- First used as a 'seal of approval' for roadside farm stands & markets
- Introduced by Clara Ford at 1930 Annual Meeting in Detroit
- Designed by Dr. Henry Turner Bailey as a gift to Association
- Spade represents outdoor work; distaff, a textile spinning tool, represents indoor, domestic work

Mildred Hague Matthaei

(Mrs. Frederick Sr.)

- Organized Ann Arbor Horticultural Committee in 1944 to share gardening information
- Sought out a national group to affiliate with, choosing WNF&GA
- Invited by National to found Ann Arbor Branch in 1946; served as first Branch president, 1946-47



Alice Wessels Burlingame



- U-M graduate in psychiatric social work; studied horticulture at MSU and returned to UM Hospital
- Recognized as founder of horticultural therapy as a profession
- WNF&GA member (Birmingham branch) for 30+ years
 - Spearheaded MI Division’s HT program

Ann Arbor Branch’s celebrated “Flower Ladies” are the oldest volunteer group still active at Mott Hospital

Miss Gertrude L. Warren



- National president, 1952
- Hired by USDA in 1917 to ‘organize canning program’
- Developed other related programs in home economic areas
- Developed the model for 4-H club work

*Gertrude was known as the
“Mother of 4-H Clubs of America”*

Gertrude L. Warren

- Involved in the establishment of National 4-H Foundation and Council, and National 4-H Center, named in her honor
- Developed National 4H Leadership Forum and founded International Foreign Youth Exchange



Matilda Dodge Wilson

(Mrs. Alfred)

- National president, 1964-66
- Respected businesswoman and philanthropist
- Honorary member of MI Division (Bloomfield, Rochester branches)



Matilda (center) at 1966 International Tea at Meadow Brook Hall; our own Verna Goss, chair of the event, is in costume at right

Faith Tiberio

(Mrs. Joseph)



- Family history brings WNF&GA history full circle
- National president, 2008-10
- Supported and completed the Ambler Greenhouse Restoration project
- Matches the annual Ambler Scholarship for Landscape Architecture

Our WNF&GA Legacy

- More than \$2 million in grants and scholarships
- Permanent annual internships
 - National Arboretum, Louisa King Dogwood Garden
 - UM Matthaei Botanical Gardens
- Established endowments
 - MI Division 4H Foundation
 - UM Matthaei Botanical Gardens (internships)



A view of the King Dogwood Garden and Memorial Fountain, National Arboretum

Our WNF&GA Legacy

- WNF&GA Visitor's Center at Ambler Arboretum, Temple University
 - Haines House holds WNF&GA memorabilia
- Archives and collections
 - Schlesinger Library at Radcliffe (National)
 - Bentley Library at UM (Ann Arbor Branch)
 - Meadow Brook Hall Library (MI Division)

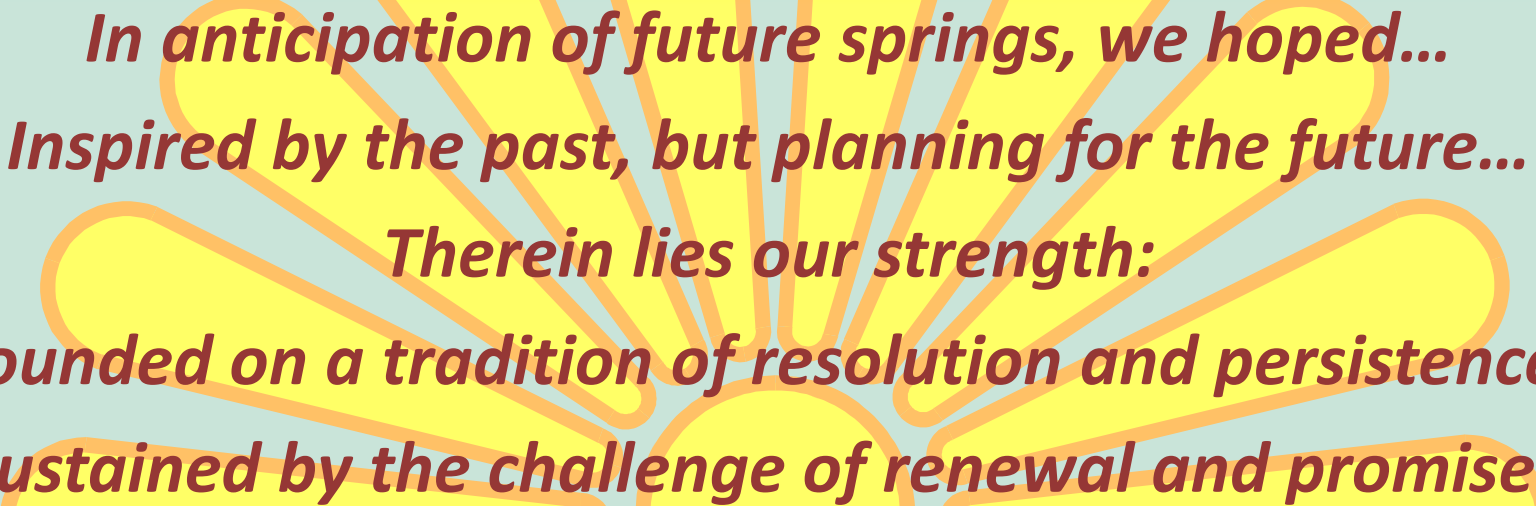


The Welcome Center is comprised of the former greenhouse and potting shed of the Pennsylvania School of Horticulture for Women. Its renovation was supported by WNF&GA under President Faith Tiberio.

Coming Full Circle

- We continue to build on the achievements of these women – philanthropy, education, and social connections ...
- The issues they raised are still relevant today – local food and farmers markets; community and school gardens; public gardens and their restoration ...
- We carry on their work through the programs and projects we support ...

Growing Hope; Agrarian Adventure; Gaffield Children's Garden; Edible Avalon; Greening of Detroit; Restoration of Belle Isle; Van Hoosen, Rochester Garden; MSU/4-H Children's Garden, and more ...



*In anticipation of future springs, we hoped...
Inspired by the past, but planning for the future...
Therein lies our strength:
founded on a tradition of resolution and persistence;
sustained by the challenge of renewal and promise...*



*And now, the second century of
leadership begins.*

Thank You!

Special thanks to the following for costumes, hats, assistance, and encouragement:

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Ann Arbor Thrift Shop

