

WOMEN of The Trustees

ENDURING
IMPACTS ON
CONSERVATION,
JUSTICE, AND
CULTURE IN THE
COMMONWEALTH
AND THE
WORLD



MINE SAWAHARA CRANE, SIPPING THE DEW, 1979;
GIFT OF MR. AND MRS. ADOLFO BEZAMAT

Women have always been an important part of the Trustees' story—shaping the organization from its beginnings to the current day. Miss Ellen Chase and Mrs. Fanny Foster Tudor are named as the only two “Founders” in the Trustees’ 2nd Annual Report (1892), an acknowledgement of their donations of \$1,000 or more in land or money. Other early supporters include Bostonians Sarah Crocker and Anna T. Phillips, and Mary Sophia Walker of Waltham.

Over the years, The Trustees has protected properties that were home to significant women in the arts and sciences—as well as several who made history as pioneering crusaders for freedom, justice, and equality for women in America and beyond—honoring their contributions by conserving their homes and

sharing their stories for the many generations that have followed.

Barbara J. Erickson joined The Trustees in 2012 as its first female President & CEO—transforming the organization for the 21st century while keeping true to the original founders’ vision. Under her leadership, The Trustees has doubled in size and experienced the highest income and audience growth in the nonprofit’s history. She was awarded the distinguished Elizabeth Craig Weaver Proctor Medal by the Garden Club of America in 2017, named Conservationist of the



ELLEN CHASE

Year by *Northshore Magazine* in 2017, and has been named in the Commonwealth Institute and *Boston Globe Magazine’s* Annual Top 100 Women-Led Businesses in Massachusetts survey for six consecutive years.

**“I WANT TO DO SOMETHING SPLENDID...
SOMETHING HEROIC OR WONDERFUL THAT
WON’T BE FORGOTTEN AFTER I’M DEAD...”**

—*Louisa May Alcott, Little Women*

Conservation Heroines

They may not be household names, but Louise Doyle, Eugenie Beal, Helen C. Butler, Mabel Choate, and Mary P. Wakeman exemplify dozens of women whose donations of property ensured the permanent protection of many of the Trustees’ most important and iconic places. Their commitment to land conservation and open space make them true heroines—for the Commonwealth, The Trustees, and millions of visitors over the years.



HELEN C. BUTLER

MONUMENT MOUNTAIN Great Barrington
Donated in 1899

This popular hiking spot with sweeping views of the Housatonic River Valley is famous for its literary connections, most notably a

legendary 1850 picnic outing that included Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville. But it would be impossible to follow in the footsteps of these literary giants had it not been for the generosity of Helen C. Butler of New York City and Stockbridge, MA (1843-1929). In 1899, Butler donated 260 acres of the reservation in memory of her sister, Rosalie, to “prevent vandals from disfiguring it with advertising signs...[and] that it might be preserved forever for the enjoyment of the public.” Later, she added an endowment for its care that has supported maintenance of the site for the thousands of its annual visitors.



MABEL CHOATE
THE MISSION HOUSE AND NAUMKEAG Stockbridge
Donated in 1948 and 1959

Mabel Choate

(1870-1949) first learned about The Trustees from her friend and collaborator, landscape architect (and former Trustees board member) Fletcher Steele. For over 30 years, Choate and Steele transformed Naumkeag (the family home she inherited in 1929) into the stunning 20th-century designed landscape visitors marvel at today. Choate left the property to the organization to help preserve the “aura of good times and gracious living” enjoyed by her family at Naumkeag.

In 1927, she purchased the historic Mission House, which was in disrepair on the hill near Naumkeag. She relocated it to Main Street, hired Steele to design colonial gardens and buildings around the restored house, and filled it with colonial-era antiques. It operated as an independent museum until Choate donated it to The Trustees in 1948, along with a significant endowment for its upkeep.



MARY P. WAKEMAN
CAPE POGE WILDLIFE REFUGE, WASQUE, AND MYTOI Chappaquiddick Island, Martha's Vineyard
Donated in 1959 (through 1995), 1967, and 1976

Mary P. Wakeman (1901-1984) devoted her life to land conservation on Martha's

Vineyard where she had lived since 1949. A founding trustee of the Vineyard Open Land Foundation and Vineyard Conservation Society, Wakeman led the fundraising efforts to protect Wasque from development by purchasing it for The Trustees in 1968. In the 1970s, she made significant contributions to help add protected land to the Trustees' Cape Poge Wildlife Refuge, and in 1976 she donated her 15-acre Japanese-inspired gardens, called Mytoi, to the organization. In 1970 she received the Trustees' Conservation Award for “distinguished service in the field of conservation and the environment.”



LOUISE DOYLE
DOYLE COMMUNITY PARK & CENTER Leominster
Donated in 1961

Louise Doyle (1912-2007) was a practicing Buddhist

and an extraordinary philanthropist who supported causes ranging from Little League to Boston's Museum of Fine Arts to the work of Mother Teresa. She challenged The Trustees to “do something important” with her donation of 170 acres of land and house in Leominster. In 2004, her dream was realized when the organization dedicated the LEED-certified Doyle Center on her property.



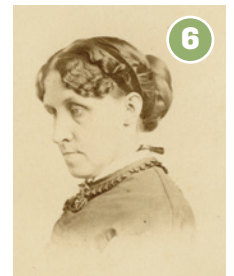
EUGENIE BEAL
BOSTON COMMUNITY GARDENS, 8 BOSTON NEIGHBORHOODS
Founded Boston Natural Areas Network in 1977

Eugenie “Genie” Beal (1921-2013) was committed to preserving the green spaces of Boston, and firmly believed that people living in cities needed to see and experience nature. A dedicated urban environmentalist, former Boston Mayor Tom Menino eulogized her as “the mother of green space in the City of Boston.” In 1977, the Boston Redevelopment Authority identified thousands of acres of threatened open space in the city of Boston. Concerned by what they heard, Beal and five other concerned citizens created Boston Natural Areas Network (BNAN) to protect urban wilds from potential loss. In 2014,

BNAN merged with The Trustees, which today owns and manages 56 community gardens across eight Boston neighborhoods and helps coordinate activities related to all of the city's more than 200 community gardens.

Women in the Arts & Sciences

Massachusetts has always been home to innovative scientists, creative thinkers, and famous artists. It's no wonder, therefore, that some exceptional women in the arts and sciences found inspiration and respite in some of the Trustees' special places.



CLARA ENDICOTT SEARS & LOUISA MAY ALCOTT

FRUITLANDS MUSEUM Harvard

Fruitlands Museum plays host to the stories of many extraordinary women, including museum founder Clara Endicott Sears (1863-1960) and former resident Louisa May Alcott (1832-1888). Sears was a prolific author and dedicated community advocate. Her love of American history and the Nashua River Valley inspired her life's work as a collector and preservationist. At age 50, Sears realized the historical significance of the farmhouse at the foot of her property.

The Fruitlands Farmhouse, a National Historic Landmark built in 1826, takes its name from the transcendentalist experiment that took place here in 1843. Led by Bronson Alcott and Charles Lane, they called this place Fruitlands because they intended to live off the “fruits of the land.” Alcott brought his wife and four young daughters, including a 10-year-old Louisa May. While the experiment was short-lived, its role in the transcendentalist movement and influence on a young Louisa May Alcott are undeniable. Many visitors may also recognize the Farmhouse attic as the inspiration of those now iconic scenes from her famous book *Little Women*.



SARAH ALDEN BRADFORD RIPLEY

THE OLD MANSE
Concord

"What a home indeed it has been to me,

which I would not exchange for all that wealth or art have to offer!"

Sarah Alden Bradford Ripley (1793-1867) and her husband, Samuel, a minister, came to live in the Ripley family home, the Old Manse, in 1846. Less than two years later, Samuel died suddenly, leaving Sarah a widow. She was by all accounts an extraordinary woman for her time. Self-taught, Ripley was fluent in many languages and was a scholar and tutor of classics, mathematics, philosophy, astronomy, and botany. Her wide-ranging knowledge brought her many admirers among the Concord intellectuals. She and the young Henry David Thoreau, for example, shared a mutual love of nature—she would often collect botanical specimens from nearby fields to share with him.



AMELIA PEABODY

POWISSET FARM AND NOANET WOODLANDS
Dover

In 1923, a young Boston heiress named Amelia Peabody

(1890-1984) began to acquire land in Dover, including what is now Powisset Farm and Noanet Woodlands. She came to the area because of the Norfolk Hunt Club, but her life there wasn't all parties and horses (though she loved both). At Powisset, she raised heritage breed Hereford cattle and Yorkshire pigs, invested in innovative architecture, filled the woods with native wildflowers, and created public riding and walking paths throughout her property. A passionate artist, Peabody studied at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, as well as in Paris and New York. Her sculpture was exhibited at the New York World's Fair, the Whitney Museum, and the Boston Athenaeum. Amelia's philanthropy reached far and wide and continues today through a charitable foundation established in her name. When

she died in 1984, Miss Peabody willed over 700 acres to The Trustees, thus establishing two of the organization's most beloved reservations.



POLLY THAYER STARR

WEIR RIVER FARM
Hingham

"I seek what the form will reveal of essence, what the visible will tell me of the invisible."

Ethel Randolph ("Polly") Thayer Starr (1904-2006) was drawn to art from an early age. Raised in a family of prominent Boston legal scholars, it was at Weir River Farm—her family's summer estate in Hingham—that Starr's captivation with the offerings of nature inspired fervid explorations into drawing and painting. Starr was trained in portraiture at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts and quickly achieved notoriety, being awarded the prestigious First Hallgarten Prize from the National Academy of Design in her mid-20s. But the infinite variety of nature would captivate her for the rest of her long life. She was a prolific painter of landscapes and animals, but also focused on the intricacies of insects and flowers, especially as her eyesight began to fail in her later years.



MINÉ SAWAHARA CRANE

THE CRANE ESTATE
Ipswich & Essex

A native of Hiroshima, Miné Sawahara Crane

(1917-1991), married Cornelius Crane, heir to the Crane Estate, in 1955, in a Shinto ceremony in Japan. She became a U.S. citizen in 1960. She was a prolific artist, musician, and patron of the arts. A flutist and harpist, she established the Mrs. Cornelius Crane Scholarship at the Julliard School. She and Cornelius lived part-time at Castle Hill, in the cottage (now the Inn at Castle Hill). She used one of the towers in the nearby garden as her art studio, which afforded sweeping views over the salt marshes. Crane was inspired by her natural surroundings; however, her

stylized landscapes and other subjects are more imaginary than realistic. Her paintings were exhibited in New York and Paris in the 1970s and 80s. Her favorite place perhaps was Choate Island, where the couple could live in complete privacy in a small cottage with views of Ipswich Bay, surrounded by grazing sheep. In 1974 she donated her own Ipswich estate (separate from Castle Hill) to The Trustees, now part of the Crane Wildlife Refuge. Following her death in 1991, she was buried alongside Cornelius on Choate Island.

Women Who Made History: Justice, Freedom, and Equality

Standing up in the face of injustice takes extraordinary courage. The stories of two women who did just that can be traced back to places now protected by The Trustees. Elizabeth Freeman and Lucy Stone, born almost a century apart, were pioneers against injustice—in the fights for freedom for enslaved people and for equality for women.



ELIZABETH FREEMAN

ASHLEY HOUSE
Sheffield

"Any time while I was a slave, if one minute's freedom had been offered to me, and I had been told I must

die at the end of that minute, I would have taken it—just to stand one minute on God's earth a free woman—I would."

These are the words of Elizabeth Freeman (ca. 1744-1829)—also known as Mum Bett—who was born into slavery. She was enslaved by Colonel John Ashley in Sheffield until 1781, when, in the midst of the American Revolution, Freeman and a man named Brom successfully sued for their freedom. Once free, Freeman chose to work for Theodore Sedgwick, the lawyer who tried her case. She and her daughter Betsy moved to Stockbridge and helped raise the seven Sedgwick children. In 1803, Freeman bought a house and 19-acre farm of her own, where she welcomed her extended family of grandchildren and great-grandchildren and lived out her life as a beloved member of the Stockbridge community.



LUCY STONE

ROCK HOUSE RESERVATION West Brookfield

Leading suffragist and abolitionist Lucy Stone (1818-1893) was born in a farmhouse on Coy's Hill in

West Brookfield (now part of Rock House Reservation). Stone was the first woman in Massachusetts to earn a college degree and organized the first National Women's Rights Convention in Worcester (1850). When she

married, she wrote her own vows, omitting the reference to obedience and insisted on keeping her surname. In 1858, Stone boldly refused to pay property taxes on the basis of "no taxation without representation." In 1879, Stone registered to vote in Massachusetts but was removed from the rolls because she did not use her husband's name.

She disagreed with the mainstream women's suffrage movement over the 14th and 15th Amendments, which guaranteed voting rights regardless of race but not gender. Stone did not see this as a setback for women, but rather a fulfillment of her

abolitionist beliefs. She formed the separate American Women Suffrage Association in 1869 but reunited with Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton's National Woman Suffrage Association in 1890. Stone continued to crusade for equality throughout her life, though it was not until nearly 30 years after her death that women received the right to vote nationally, with the passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920. Her dreams for equality for people of color took much longer to realize, however—their right to vote wasn't guaranteed until the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965.

"I BELIEVE THAT THE INFLUENCE OF WOMAN WILL SAVE THE COUNTRY BEFORE EVERY OTHER POWER."

—Lucy Stone



I AM AMERICA

The year 2020 marks several historical milestones connected to the definition of American identity: the 400th anniversary of the landing of English colonists in Plymouth; the centenary of white women's suffrage in the U.S., and the General Election and opportunity to elect the President of the United States, including the debates of nation, race, and history that surround it. In response, The Trustees is focusing on telling the stories of those often marginalized in the history of America, including those of indigenous peoples, African-Americans, and women.

I AM AMERICA will explore the great variety of backgrounds and experiences that contribute to American identity, engaging visitors and the public in an exchange of ideas around this timely theme. Be sure to visit thetrustees.org/iamamerica for updates on programs and events exploring this important subject.

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