



1—Miss Greene, 2—Mrs. Mumford, 3—Mrs. Palmer, 4—Miss Dailey, 5—Miss Bucklin,  
6—Miss Hammond, 7—Miss Hunt, 8—Mrs. Norton, 9—Miss Hopkins, 10—Miss Metcalf,  
11—Miss Richardson, 12—Mrs. Brownell, 13—Miss Miner,  
14—Miss Wheeler, 15—Mrs. Chace, 16—Miss Mauran.

## A PICTURE IN SEARCH OF A TITLE

BY MILDRED C. TILLEY

**I**n 1959, Providence photographer Eileen McClure displayed this picture in the window of her Arcade studio. She had printed it from an old glass negative she had found under a heap of rubbish left in her studio by a former occupant, William Mills. It excited considerable interest, but no one knew who the women were or why they had been thus pictured. The late indefatigable Mary May Blumer undertook to discover some of the identities and made some progress. The retired head of the Athenaeum lent a hand by combing the biography of Mary C. Wheeler, the founder of Wheeler School, and discovering that she had been named to the 1892 Woman's World's Fair Advisory Board. With this as a clue it was possible to locate the names of 24 members and two alternates from the Report of the World's Fair Managers to Governor D. Russell Brown. But only 16 appeared in the picture. Which sixteen? Some, but far from all, could be identified, through the help of many interested people. Finally, almost five years to the day after Miss McClure had first displayed the picture, a small faded print with the

names written in by an anonymous contemporary was unearthed in a package of memorabilia which had been tucked away in a forgotten corner of the John Brown House, awaiting the day when the Rhode Island Historical Society should have a library with enough room to store and display such material.

At the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago this picture hung in the Assembly Hall where visitors could recognize the Rhode Island spirit reflected in these faces.

It was a time when ladies preferred to be known as women. The United States Congress had other ideas however, and provided, in the Act creating the World's Columbian Commission, for appointment of a Board of Lady Managers.

"... the ridiculous title 'Lady Managers,'" fumed one of them, "... conveys the impression that we are useless ornaments—idle women of fashion . . ."

Rhode Island tactfully appointed a Woman's World's Fair Advisory Board and one chilly day in 1892 or '93, sixteen of the twenty-four board members climbed the steps of the Arcade to the studio of William Mills and

Son to have a picture taken.

These were not useless ornaments or idle women. Each was a leader in some phase of women's interests or in a particular area of the state.

1. Mary Anne Greene represented the legal profession. She was graduated from Boston Law School magna cum laude, second in a class with 28 men, and was the second woman admitted to the Massachusetts Bar. After several years' practice of law in Boston she had returned to Providence to specialize in the care and settlement of estates. At the Fair she addressed the Congress of Jurisprudence and Law Reform on the married women's property acts in the United States, and needed reforms.

2. Mrs. George A. Mumford of Pawtucket had the difficult task of selecting Rhode Island examples of the traditionally feminine art of needlework for exhibit in Chicago. No doubt the entries were many and the competition keen. Fortunately, Mrs. Mumford had the dual authority of her position as alternate on the national board of lady managers as well as her place on this advisory board to give weight to her decisions.

3. Library work was ably represented by Fanny Purdy Palmer who had compiled a list of Rhode Island literary women by June 1892 as the pilot effort toward the board's cooperative production, *Rhode Island Woman's Directory for the Columbian Year*. The completed Directory of 122 pages listed names of Rhode Island women "classified and arranged alphabetically by business or avocation" and included statistics on women workers in mills and factories, lists of women associated in organizations "for Charitable and other Purposes," information on organizations governed by women, and similar "laboriously accumulated" material.

Mrs. Palmer pioneered in other fields. She was the first woman member of the Providence School Board, founder of the Rhode Island Short Story Club and, later, state inspector of factories and workshops.

4. Charlotte Field Dailey, perched symbolically higher than the others on the front row, was chairman of this advisory board and a Rhode Island lady manager on the national board. She was also secretary and treasurer of the Rhode Island Board of World's Columbian Commissioners.

Long before the 15 others gathered around her for this picture she had been publicizing the Fair.

"At the coterie of the Women's Educational and Industrial Union yesterday, Miss Charlotte Dailey spoke interestingly on the World's Fair," reported the *Providence Telegram*, November 5, 1891, of one of her appearances.

5. Quite at home in the Arcade was Loraine Pearce Bucklin, daughter of one of that building's designers,

architect James C. Bucklin. Listed in the Directory under the heading "Literary Women, Authoresses, Lecturers, etc.," she was Miss Dailey's alternate on the national board and addressed the Fair's Literary Congress on prominent women of the American Republic.

6. Sculptor Jane Nye Hammond presented some of her work in the Women's Building at the Fair and contributed a bronze bas relief and other pieces to the Fine Arts Building. At home, she exhibited at the Art Club and taught sculpture at Miss Wheeler's school, dividing her time between Providence and her Boston studio.

7. Working girls had a staunch representative in Elizabeth A. Hunt, treasurer of the Working Women's Beneficial Society and first directress of an organization labeled Ladies' Social Assembly, 4077, K.F. of L., Providence, which was, the Directory states, "wholly educational" and "entirely self-supporting." She was also president of St. Paul's Benevolent Aid and of Knights of Labor, Olneyville, all with offices at what was then 1055 High Street. It was probably due largely to her that the Woman's Directory contains information about working women in Rhode Island in the early '90s which was not available in any other publication of the time.

8. Mrs. Charles P. Norton worked with Mrs. Mumford on the selection of needlework for exhibit but she must have been preoccupied with family as well. One son, Gorham N., had just been graduated from Brown, and the other, Louis D., was returning from his study of art in Europe.

9. Sara F. Hopkins had started her Sunday women's page in the *Providence Journal* six years before this picture was taken. It was the first such department outside New York. In 1892 that established page was to remind readers regularly of the importance of the coming World's Fair and Rhode Island's participation in it.

10. Anna Metcalf, head of Woonsocket's Harris Institute Library and president of the Woonsocket Fortnightly Club, represented the northern area of the state. Later she would move to Providence to be a reference librarian and "catalogist" at Brown University, and a charter member of the Rhode Island Society for the Collegiate Education of Women, that organization largely responsible for the building of Pembroke Hall, and still in existence.

11. Louise Richardson, recording secretary of the board, posed appropriately leaning on her book of minutes. She demonstrated her administrative ability in her many church and club activities and on the staff and board of the Providence Athenaeum.

12. On the evening of December 16, 1890, "a brilliant social assemblage" celebrating the marriage of Amey Dorrance Mauran and Winthrop W. Brownell,

heard the wedding march composed by the bride. As Mrs. Brownell, she contributed her published compositions to the Fair's Musical Library and collected material on musical organizations for the Directory.

13. Susan Miner, representing ceramics, was fitted by environment for judging that category, according to a relative who said, years later, that Miss Miner "had lived in the large family house filled with important art objects and lived a brilliant social and intellectual life."

14. At the time this picture was taken Mary Colman Wheeler had established a girls' school at 26 Cabot Street, Providence, and was on the verge of purchasing Froebel School, a venture that made a friend exclaim, "How long before you think to annex Brown University?" Since her school was the outgrowth of studio classes she had conducted in Providence and Europe, it was fitting that she should be appointed to advise on painting.

15. Mrs. Henry R. Chace, a sister of Miss Dailey, represented the classification, Primary Education. Some 18 pages of the Directory listing names of teachers, are probably evidence of her industry. The lists are divided into teachers of public school, private, dancing, drawing and painting, dress cutting, French, kindergarten, music, penmanship and two Newport women are listed as teachers of the use of sewing machines.

16. Panels of wood carved by women of the various states formed a frieze in the Women's Building at the Fair. Rhode Island's white pine plaque showed the arms of Rhode Island with the initials J.L.M. worked into the design. The artist, Julia Lippitt Mauran, also carved a wooden chest for the building's display. Later she was to teach manual training in Miss Wheeler's school and would be a charter member of the Handicraft Club.

Somewhere there may be a print of this photograph with the faces of Mrs. William Ames and Mrs. Joshua Wilbour inserted, for such a picture was hung in the Rhode Island State Building at the Fair.

Mrs. Ames represented charities on the advisory board. The fact that she was the fifth woman to be secretary of the Female Charitable Society—an office that had passed from mother to daughter since the founding of the Society in 1800—implies an hereditary interest in benevolence. She was also secretary of The Rhode Island Exchange for Women's Work and president of the Rhode Island Branch, Women's Auxiliary to the Board of Missions.

Mrs. Joshua Wilbour represented Bristol, with Mrs. Frank S. Pratt as her alternate. Mrs. Wilbour was the first State Regent of the Daughters of the American Revolution and one of the first five such state officers to be appointed. If she were the person who obtained listings of Bristol women for the Directory, that work

was another demonstration of her organizing ability. Besides those in the more usual occupations, Bristol listed a woman dentist, a geologist, a compositor on the *Phenix* and the only woman under the heading Ice Cream, a well-named Mrs. Spooner.

There were other members of the Rhode Island Woman's World's Fair Advisory Board who failed to reach the photographer's studio that day.

Mrs. Rowland Hazard representing South Kingstown, and her alternate, writer Esther Bernon Carpenter, were not present. Mrs. Hazard was probably in California where she spent the winter months of 1892-'93, but her daughter, Caroline, wrote a poem that was read at the Fair's Rhode Island Day ceremonies on October 5, 1893.

Mrs. Charles Perry of Westerly was not in the picture although, as treasurer of the World's Fair Westerly Committee, she must have spurred the enlisting of 285 subscribers to a fund that provided a handsome vase of Westerly granite for the main entrance of the Women's Building at the Fair.

Helen Cordelia Putnam, M.D., representing her profession, read a paper before the Fair's Educational Congress on "Supervision of School Gymnastics by Qualified Physicians." She had just started her practice in Providence after serving an internship in the New England Hospital for Women and Children in Boston. The Directory lists her as president of The Dispensary for Women and Children in Providence.

Perhaps Sarah J. Eddy, photographer, considered her place to be behind the camera, not in front of it. An example of her work, which had won a gold medal in a Boston show, was hung in the Fair's Manufacturing Building.

The Reverend Anna Garlin Spencer, representing religion, was an ordained minister connected with Bell Street Chapel in Providence. A sample of her practiced eloquence appeared in *The Congress of Women*, a thick gilt-edged volume of addresses delivered at the Fair. Written on the advantages and dangers of women's organizations, Mrs. Spencer's paper could pass muster today with little editing. She was vice president of the Rhode Island Woman's Suffrage Association and of the Providence Free Kindergarten Association and she acted upon the Fair's Jury of Charities and Corrections.

Alida E. Sprague, representing girls' clubs, was president of the Mount Pleasant Working Girls' Club which she founded. Many years later, as Mrs. Henry A. Whitmarsh, she would be made honorary life president of Federal Hill House Association, today's thriving descendant of that early club.

These impressive women helped Rhode Island celebrate, with the rest of the world, the 400th anniversary of Columbus' discovery of America.