



Donate and Support

Uncovering Black History in the Willard Archives

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NAME	ADDRESS	STATE	DATE	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	DATE	LOCATION	DATE	LOCATION	DATE
Wells	111 N. Dearborn St.	Ill.	1880	WCTU Chicago	Chicago	1880	Chicago	1880	Chicago	1880
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During Black History Month and beyond, work continues on *Black Women of the WCTU*. This project expands on *Truth Telling: Frances Willard and Ida B. Wells* by creating a research database documenting the little-known story of the Black women who were involved in the WCTU. Our archivists, Janet Olson and Kristin Jacobsen, provided an in-depth description of the undertaking in this [video presentation](#) for the 2021 Chicago Open Archives conference.

We are currently in the process of gathering information and building partnerships. As intern Amelia Perkins described in her [blog post](#), she spent the summer populating a spreadsheet with an initial set of names and union locations gathered from National WCTU reports. Loyola University Chicago Public History students will soon begin testing a pilot project to mine information from the state-level WCTU reports in our collections, as well as historical newspapers and census records. We will continue sharing news of this project as we discover more.

February Handicraft Hour: Homemade Toys 🧸

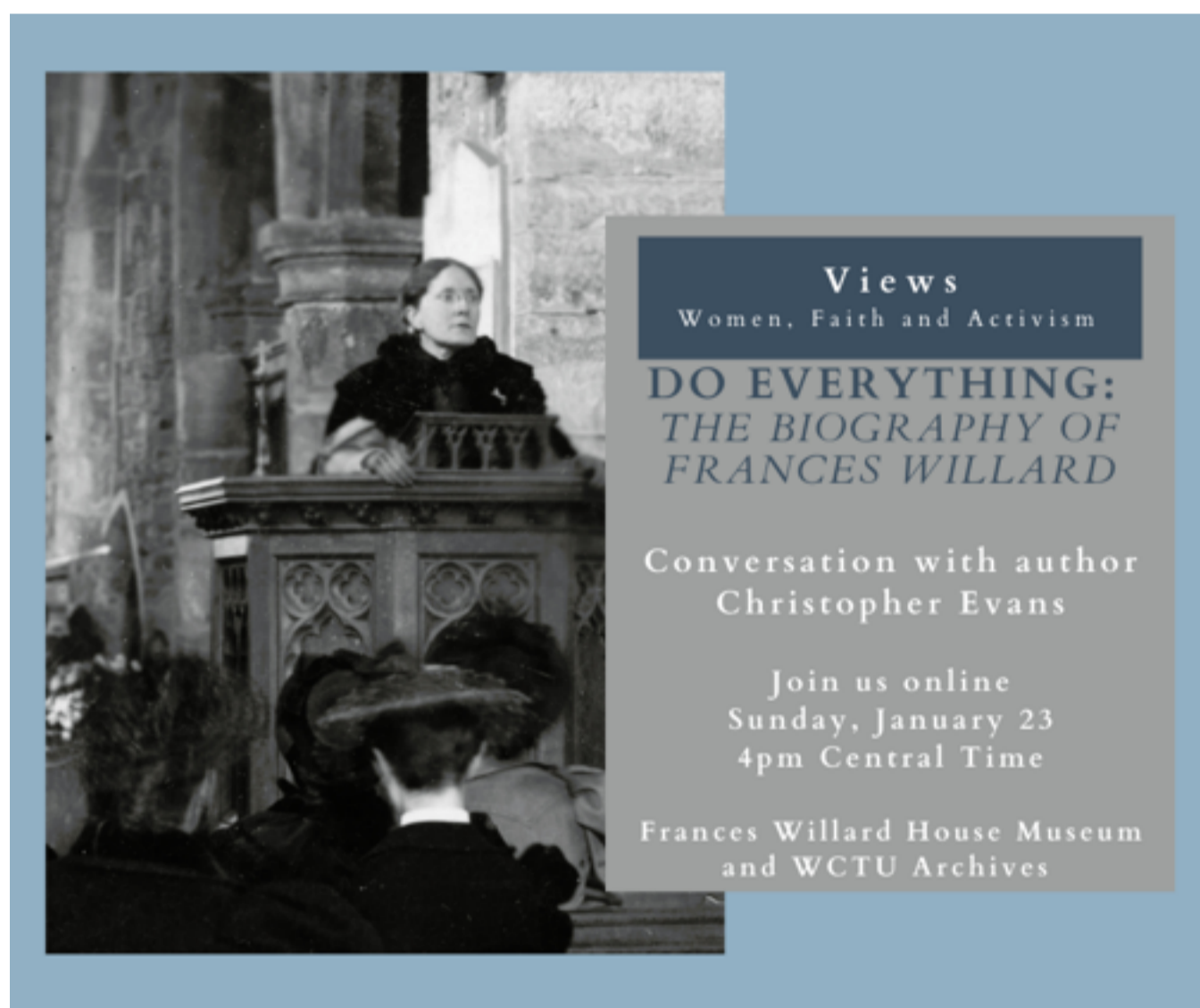


Our February Handicraft Hour will take place on **Sunday, February 20 at 4pm Central Time** and will highlight the **homemade toys** in our collection. When nineteenth-century children fashioned their own playthings, they used them to construct imaginary worlds that foreshadowed the reforms they would advocate as adults. Reflecting on her own experiences with handcrafted toys, Frances Willard believed that relying on "their own wits at invention" was essential for young people "to develop their own best gifts." Participants of all ages are encouraged to attend this free virtual event. Come to craft and chat, or just to listen!

**RSVP [here](#). A Zoom link will be sent shortly before the event to everyone who registers.**

Handicraft Hours are part of the *Arts at the Willard House* series, which explores the connections between women's creativity, community building, and social change. This winter's presentations are focusing on **young people's formative creative experiences**.

January Recap: Books and Newspapers

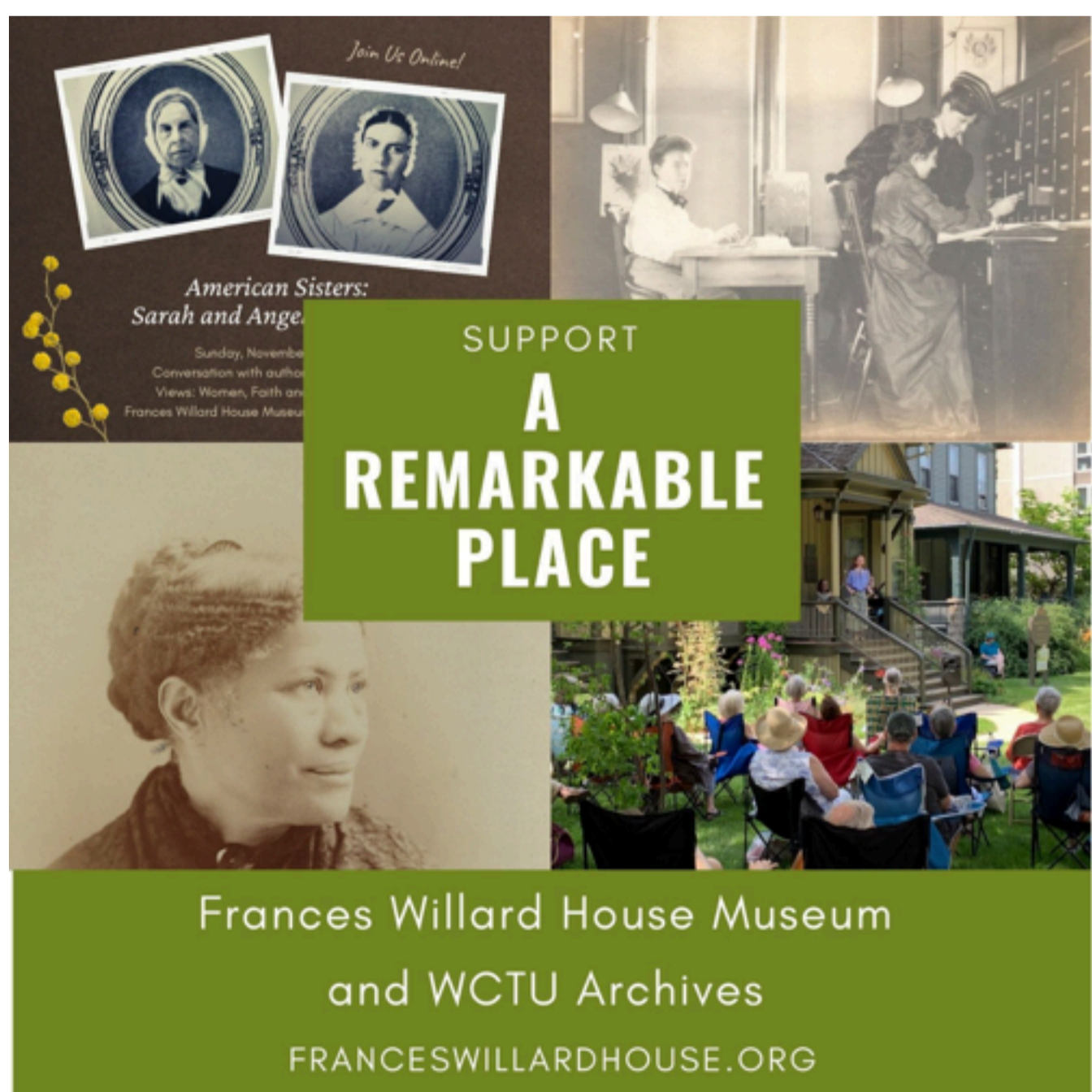


Thank you to everyone who attended our *Views* program on January 23! We enjoyed a fascinating conversation with Christopher Evans about his forthcoming book, *Do Everything: The Biography of Frances Willard*. His book, to be published by Oxford University Press later this year, will be the first new Willard biography in over 35 years. Evans is Professor of the History of Christianity at Boston University, and his book pays particular attention to how Willard's religious convictions shaped her life. You can watch a recording of the event [here](#).



And thank you to everyone who attended **Handicraft Hour** on January 30! We explored how nineteenth-century young people honed skills in collaboration and self-expression by crafting family, club, and school newspapers, and we heard great stories from participants about their own childhood newspaper endeavors.

Year-in-Review: Explore our 2021 Annual Report



Our 2021 annual report is now available on our [website](#). The report details our operations and shows how [your support](#) makes it possible to preserve our site, make our collections accessible, and unearth and share women's stories.

Willard House Tours Resume in March!

While we remain closed for in-person tours during February, we will reopen for visitors in March – just in time for Women's History Month! Stay tuned for more details about tour dates and registration. In the meantime, join us for our online public programs and explore the many resources available on our [website](#), including [digital exhibits](#), [blog posts](#), and more.

February Collection Highlight: Fort City



As children growing up on a Wisconsin farm, Frances Willard and her siblings created an imaginary town out of homemade blocks. "Fort City" was dotted with houses, farms, schools, churches, and businesses. It possessed its own laws and elected officials, as well as a newspaper. Notably, it was a temperance town, and women held the highest offices in municipal government. To learn more about Fort City, check out this [video](#) from 2020 – and join us for February Handicraft Hour!

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