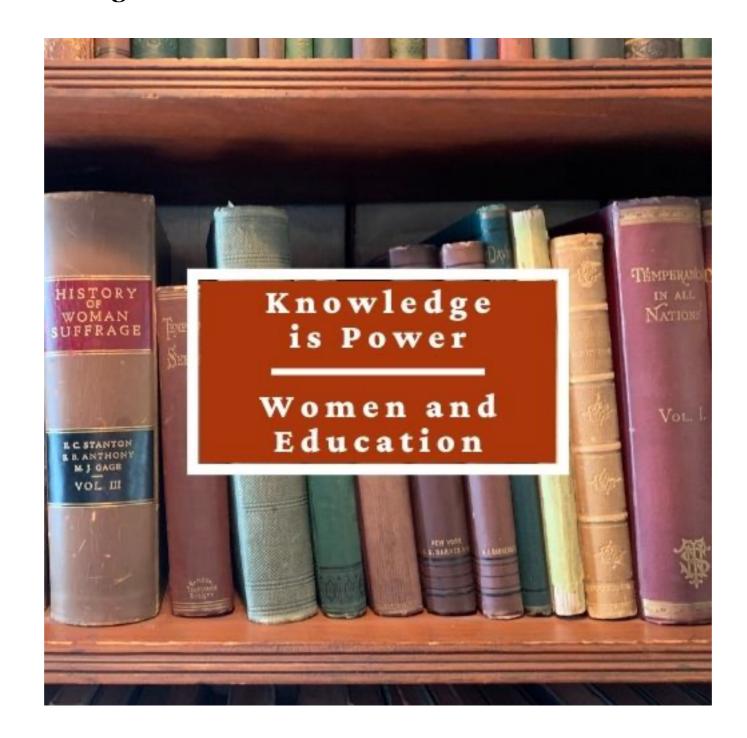


Donate and Support

Knowledge is Power: Women and Education



The Frances Willard House Museum and WCTU Archives is excited to announce our new program and content theme, *Knowledge is Power: Women and Education*. In recognition of Frances Willard's role as President of the Evanston College for Ladies (1871-1873) and Dean of Women at Northwestern University (1873-1874), we are uncovering the history – and the prehistory – of women's higher education in Evanston.

Explore the first installment, a new <u>blogpost</u> by Fiona Maxwell (Willard House Director of Museum Operations and Communications, University of Chicago History PhD candidate) tracing how, as a young girl, Frances Willard connected writing and speaking to social reform.

Join the Evanston History Center on Saturday, September 17th at 11am for an education-focused <u>Evanston Women's History Walking Tour</u>. Starting at the Willard House at 1730 Chicago Avenue and traveling through southeast Evanston, the tour will explore how Evanston's environment fostered women's independence and encouraged them to become leaders in the fight for women's rights.

Although the Willard House will be investigating and sharing our site's

connection to women's education in special detail this year, it has always been a key theme in our storytelling. Check out our existing digital resources below, and stay tuned for new content and upcoming programs!

- <u>Frances Willard Digital Journals</u>: This website provides access to searchable transcriptions of Frances Willard's journals, which contain entries pertaining to her educational experiences starting at the age of 16.
- <u>Frances Willard Biographical Timeline</u>: This timeline uses images and documents to illustrate stages in Willard's life, including her time as a student, schoolteacher, and higher education leader.
- <u>Frances Willard and Women's Oratory</u>: Focusing on Willard's contributions to oratory, this blogpost explores the ways in which she served as a role model for Northwestern students and other women who aspired to make their voices heard in public.
- <u>Mary Thompson Hill Willard</u>: This blogpost highlights the ways in which Mary Willard, Frances Willard's mother, drew on her years of experience working as a schoolteacher to mentor and inspire her daughter.

Donate and Support

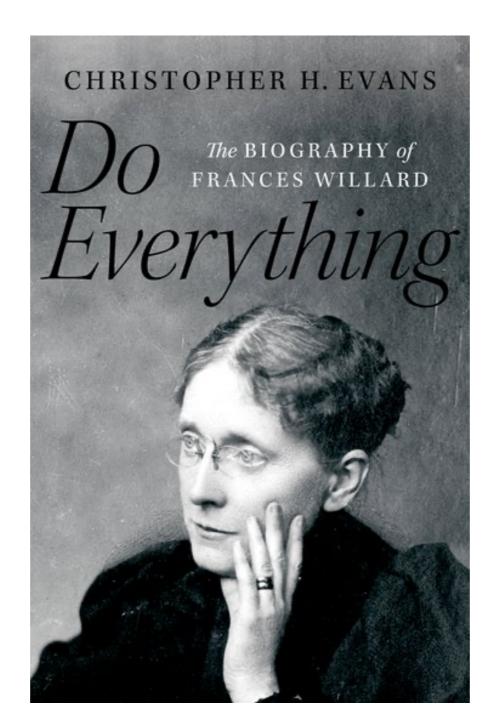
September Tours!

The Willard House is currently accepting reservations for September tours! Tours will be held at 1pm, 2pm, and 3pm on the following dates:

- Thursdays, September 15 and 22
- Sundays, September 18 and 25

Tours are available by reservation only. Masks are required. V isitors should request a tour by emailing <u>info@franceswillardhouse.org</u> or calling (847) 328-7500. Tour fees are \$15 per person. Admission is free for students at all levels. Payment must be made online or over the phone once the tour day and time has been confirmed.

Save the Date: Christopher Evans Book Talk, October 20

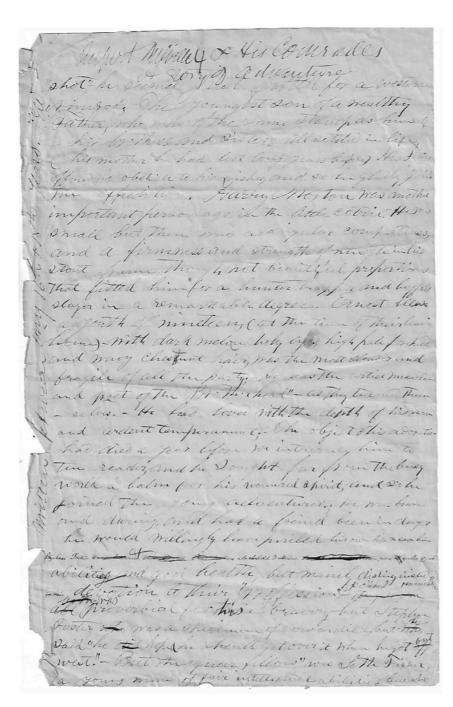


Join us on October 20th at 6pm at Bookends & Beginnings for an in-person conversation and book-signing event with Dr. Christopher Evans (Boston University) and Janet Olson (Willard House Archivist) about Evans' latest book, *Do Everything: The Biography of Frances Willard*. In this first new biography of Willard in over 35 years, Evans makes use of primary source materials not accessible to previous biographers, and he highlights Willard's importance to the fields of women's history, Gilded Age and Progressive Era studies, and religious history.

The talk will focus especially on the ways in which Evanston's community of women shaped Willard, as well as the new perspectives Evans has brought to her complex life, work, and legacy. Click <u>here</u> for more information and a link to register.

Collection Close-up: Rupert Melville and His Comrades

Frances Willard started keeping a journal at the age of twelve, and by the time she was a young teenager she was writing "more than ever." When she finished her chores, she climbed to her "high perch in the old oak tree" on her Wisconsin farm to "write down the day's proceedings" and "scribble sketches and verses." She soon began a novel entitled, *Rupert Melville and His Comrades: A Story of Adventure*, and "insisted on doing at least one page" every day.



The first handwritten page of Rupert Melville.

Rupert Melville was inspired by story books set on the Western prairies, which Willard had "secretly devoured... without leave or license." She reported that the stories "had produced on my imagination the same effect that they would upon a boy's." She enlisted her sister Mary to help design a "Hunter's Costume" for "the hero" of her novel and decided that "above all things in earth or sky," she wanted to become "a mighty hunter" of the Wild West.

Willard recalled that her novel became a "standing joke in the family." It had so many characters that her brother teased she wouldn't be able to "get them all decently killed off inside of a thousand pages." In Frances's estimation, no one "appreciated it more than Lizzie Hawley, a bright young dressmaker from Janesville, to whom I was wont to read each chapter aloud, as fast as it was written."

The enjoyment Willard derived from narrating Rupert's adventures convinced her that "write I could and should and *would*." The WCTU Archives houses the entire 165-page (unfinished) manuscript of the novel. You can learn more about Willard's early growth as a writer on our <u>blog</u>.

Women's Equality Day Postscript

Thank you to everyone who celebrated Women's Equality Day (August 26) with us, either by taking a suffrage tour of the Willard House or by exploring our related digital resources. If you weren't able to join us in person, you can read an account of our Women's Equality Day tours in Debbie Marie-Brown's <u>article</u> for the *Evanston RoundTable*.



Before we turn the page on Women's Equality Day, we have an exciting announcement to make! The National Women's History Museum has just released a new digital anthology, *Determined to Rise: Women's Historical Activism for Equal Rights*. This collection of essays puts forward a broader understanding of the woman suffrage movement, acknowledging both the achievements and limitations resulting from the ratification of the 19th Amendment. Lori Osborne, the Willard House Museum Director, and Marie Pellissier, a former Willard House intern, contributed an essay about "Frances Willard and the Historic Link Between the 19th Century Women's Temperance and Suffrage Movements." The anthology is currently available in e-book format.



