

GFWC Headquarters, Washington, D.C.



During a June 2018 visit to Washington D.C., I spent a lovely afternoon touring GFWC Headquarters, including a peek into the Women's History and Resource Center which collects, preserves, interprets, and promotes the history of the GFWC and women volunteers.

Named a National Historic Landmark in 1991, GFWC Headquarters is a snapshot in time. Its historic Victorian style has been maintained through generous contributions from members and friends. The beautifully decorated rooms, furniture, and historic collections are certainly worth a visit! Especially during the Holiday Open House when the house is beautifully decorated.



Photo courtesy GFWC

Kathy Cochran



Photo courtesy GFWC

GFWC Headquarters is a National Historic Landmark located at 1734 N Street, NW in Washington D.C. Built in 1875, it had 5 owners before being sold to GFWC in 1922 and becoming GFWC's official headquarters.

Headquarters serves as the working offices for the GFWC International President and staff. It is also the literal home to the GFWC International President during her two-year administration, with residences occupying 1734's upper floors. Headquarters serves as host to events, such as the annual Women's History Month event and Holiday Open House, and the property houses the popular Iron Gate Inn Restaurant.

For more history, go to <https://www.gfwc.org/about/history-and-mission/>



Staircase with portrait of GFWC founder Jane Cunningham Croly



One of the past owners was John and Grace White. Grace, a suffragist, peace activist, and writer, decorated some of the home's furnishings with poetic sentiments. A few of these are now in GFWC's collections, including the music room mantel engraved with the words: *"I can not warm you if your heart be cold."* (Zoom in on photo to see engraving.)

Mr. White's interest in exotic animals and birds is reflected in the painted wall canvasses by noted muralist Albert Herter that are still in the drawing room. (photo below)







Women's History
and Resource Center





General Federation of Women's Clubs

Founded in 1890, GFWC's roots can be traced back to 1868 when Jane Cunningham Croly, a professional journalist, attempted to attend a dinner at an all-male press club honoring British novelist Charles Dickens. Croly was denied admittance based upon her gender, and in response, formed a woman's club—Soros. In celebration of Soros' 21st anniversary in 1889, Jane Croly invited women's clubs throughout the United States to pursue the cause of federation by attending a convention in New York City.

On April 24, 1890, 63 clubs officially formed the General Federation of Women's Clubs by ratifying the GFWC constitution. Its purpose, to support clubs throughout the nation and further their efforts at providing education, improved working conditions, health care, scholarships, and other reforms. Since 1890, GFWC's impact has been felt throughout communities across the United States and the globe.



Information adapted from GFWC website
Photos by Kathy Cochran except where noted otherwise.