

Frances Willard

1839–1898



“I would not waste my life in friction when it could be turned into momentum.”

Frances Willard

Arguing for “Home Protection” against the evils of alcohol, Frances Willard linked the movements for Temperance and Woman’s Suffrage.

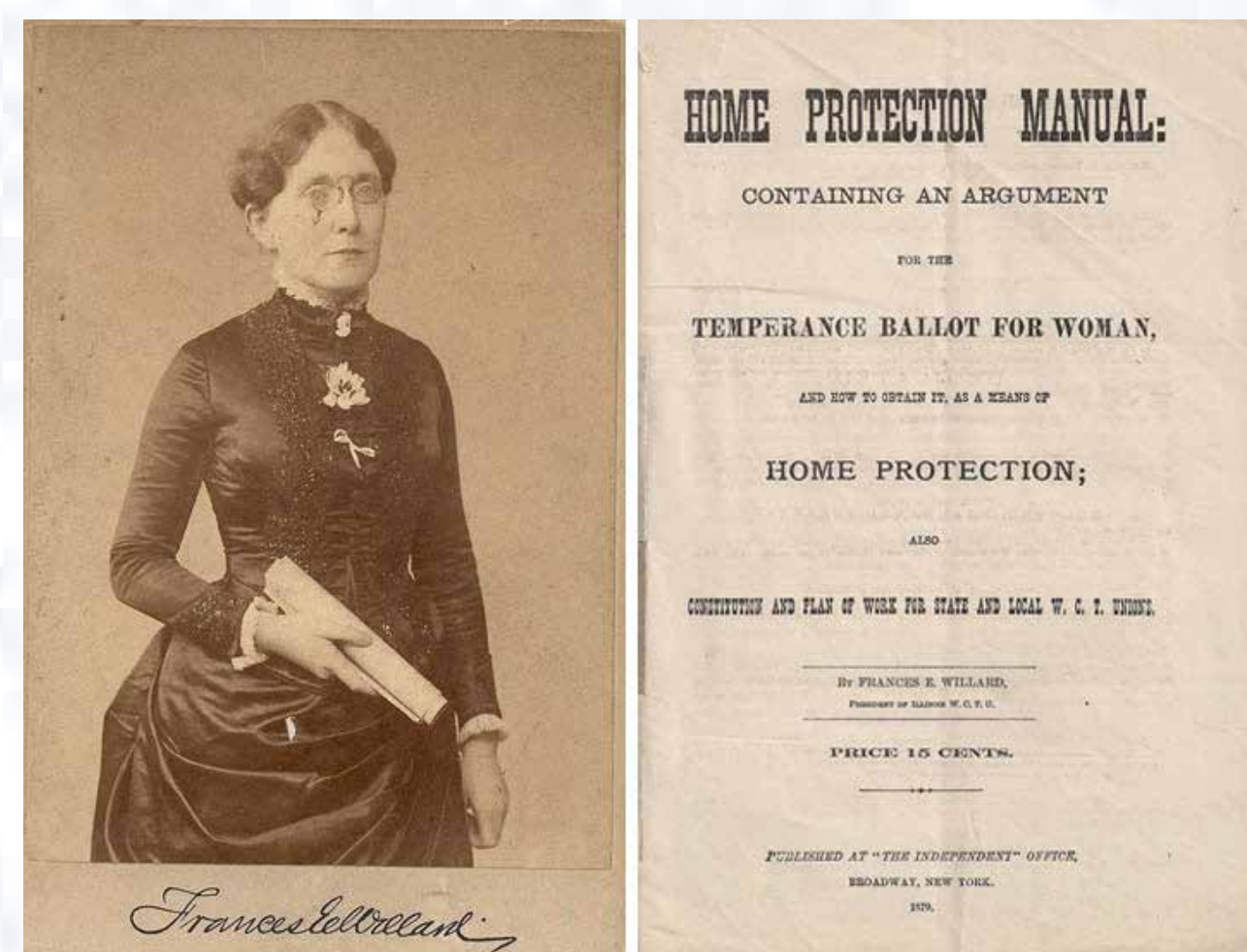
Sober Minded

Growing up in Janesville, Wisconsin sixteen year old Frances Willard pasted this poem into the family Bible. “A pledge we make, no wine to take/ nor brandy red that turns the head...So here we pledge perpetual hate to all that can intoxicate.”

WCTU

As President of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union Frances Willard was one of the most widely known figures in America. Susan B. Anthony saw potential support for suffrage in this movement. At an 1888 congressional hearing she introduced Willard as “the commander-in-chief of an army of 250,000 women.” Distillers were concerned. The President of an industry group warned members: “Gentlemen, we need fear the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union and the ballot in the hands of women: therefore,

gentleman, fight woman suffrage.”



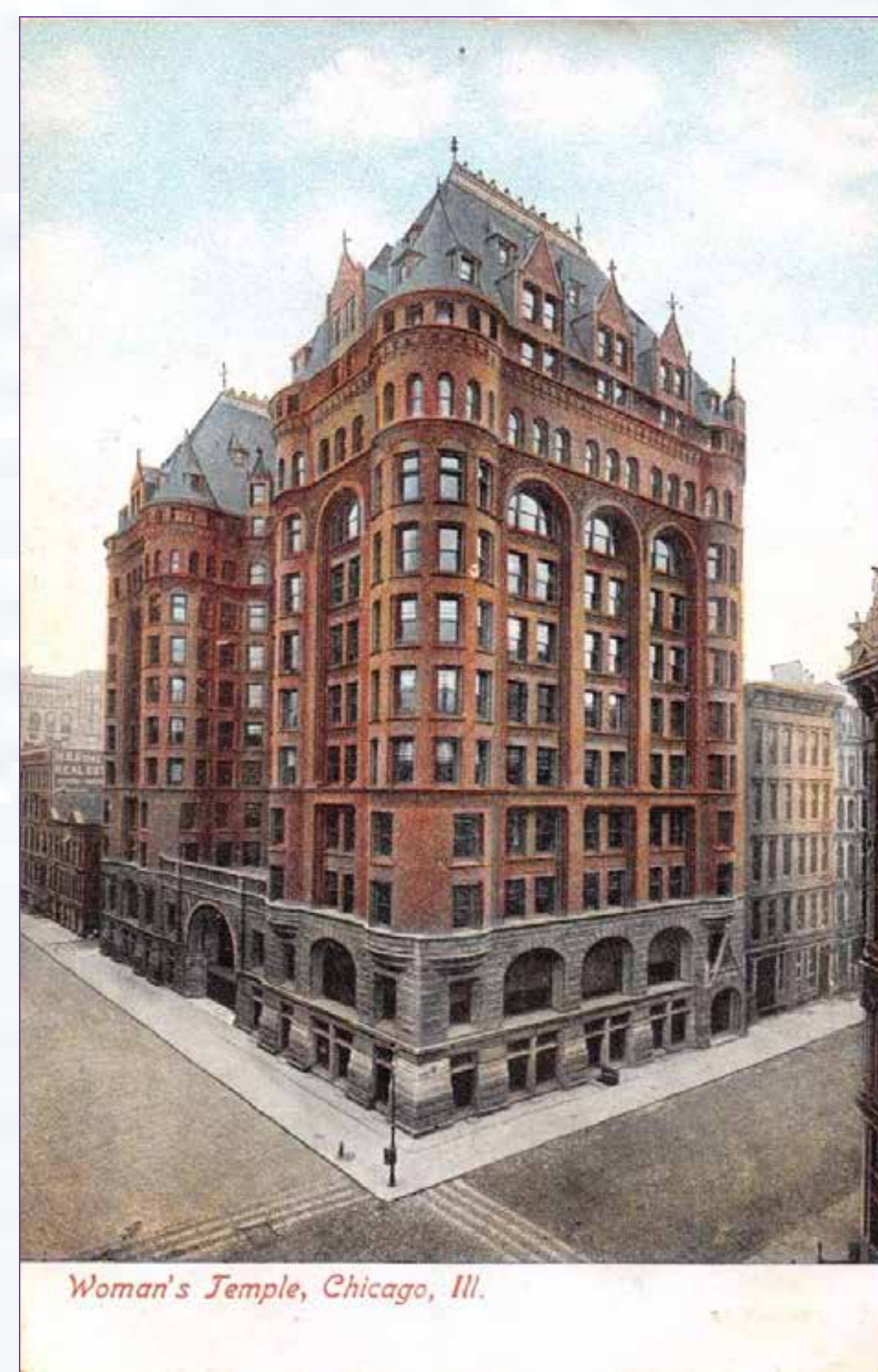
This publication urged woman suffrage for “Home Protection.” Prohibition of alcohol would prevent domestic abuse, abandonment, injury, and loss of income by alcoholic fathers. FRANCES WILLARD HOUSE MUSEUM AND WCTU ARCHIVES

Do Everything

Willard’s legacy is extensive. In addition to “home protection” through prohibition and suffrage, she urged followers to “Do Everything,” embracing a wide range of reforms. She called herself a “Christian Socialist,” endorsed an eight hour day and government ownership of utilities and railroads, as well as prison reform (including separate women’s facilities,) free kindergarten, less restrictive clothing for women, and vegetarianism.



Frances Willard A renowned platform speaker, Willard believed that women had the right to vote regardless of the issue. As a strategy she tried to overcome resistance, even by some women, by arguing that woman’s suffrage was needed to fulfill the traditional role of home protection.



The Woman’s Temple, headquarters of the WCTU. Developing the property was an impressive achievement for Willard, although the building incurred severe financial losses during the Panic of 1893. CHUCKMAN’S PHOTOS ON WORDPRESS

In her fifties, Willard took up the practice of bicycling for the first time. In her book “A Wheel within a Wheel” she urged women to ride for exercise and transportation and to promote the issue of dress reform. FRANCES WILLARD HOUSE MUSEUM AND WCTU ARCHIVES



Womans’ Education

Frances Willard became President of the Evanston College for Ladies and was the first Dean of Women at Northwestern University. After a falling out with the university President, her former fiancé, she turned to the cause of temperance.



“Rest Cottage” was the home of Frances Willard in Evanston, Illinois. Moved by religious faith she called Evanston the Methodist “heaven.” Today it is the Frances Willard House Museum and WCTU Archives. ELISA.ROLLE

Ida B. Wells

With Southern advocates of prohibition Willard argued that black men would commit fewer crimes if denied access to alcohol. Ida B. Wells, a black journalist and activist, strongly objected to the implication that lynching was caused by the behavior of black men.



Ida B. Wells

Willard eventually stated her opposition to lynching, as did the WCTU through resolutions. This controversy and her advocacy of temperance (admired in the nineteenth century but unfashionable today) have affected her reputation yet she retains a legacy as a significant advocate of woman’s suffrage and reform.