



innovative by nature

Lucia Fidelia Woolley Gillette (1827-1905)

Writer, lecturer, missionary, and Minister, Fidelia Gillette was hailed as a “thinker of uncommon breadth” for her efforts in the fight for women’s suffrage during the 1870s.

A resident of Rochester, Fidelia was the Women’s Rights Editor for the *Rochester Era* and owned an interest in *Truth for the People*, an advocacy newspaper dedicated to “the best interest of the people politically, morally, and socially.”

Prior to the 1920 ratification of the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution granting women the right to vote, women had no direct political power in the United States. Prayer vigils, petition campaigns, demonstrations, and hymn singing were the only means at their disposal for effecting social and political change.

Fidelia lent her voice to the Woman’s Temperance movement, the Rochester Literary and Library Society, and spoke throughout the State of Michigan on behalf of the Woman Suffrage Society.

In 1874 Fidelia was one of 10 men and women chosen to represent Rochester and Avon Township at the Michigan State Woman’s Suffrage Associations’ annual meeting in Lansing. She and her fellow delegates waged a campaign to drum up support for a women’s rights amendment to the state constitution. Although the proposal was eventually defeated, Fidelia continued her quest for universal suffrage through lectures and writing, publishing several volumes of poetry and essays.

Ordained a Universalist minister in 1877, Fidelia performed missionary work throughout the U.S. and Canada. She returned briefly to Rochester before retiring to the Universalist Home in Philadelphia.

Fidelia died in Pennsylvania at the age of 78.





Online Resources

NOTE: If the below links do not take you directly to the photo or document, click on “Open Document File” under the Links section.

- Biographical sketch of Fidelia Gillette from *A Woman of the Century*:
<https://archive.org/details/womanofcenturyfo00will/page/320/mode/2up?q=fidelia+>
- *Floating Leaves* by Lucia Fidelia Woolley Gillette:
<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=loc.ark:/13960/t7pn9mp66&view=2up&seq=2>
- *Pebbles from the Shore* by Lucia Fidelia Woolley Gillette:
<https://archive.org/details/pebblesfromshore00gill/page/n8/mode/2up>
- A poem called “Changeless Friends” by Fidelia W. Gillette in the November 27, 1873 Rochester Era newspaper (see page 4):
<http://oaklandcountyhistory.org/awweb/awarchive?item=202129>