

*Anna*

minister

*Howard*

physician

*Shaw*

suffragist

ONE OF GOD'S AMAZING WOMEN

1847



1919

by Shirley B. Porter

ANNA HOWARD SHAW

One of God's Amazing Women

"Moreover, some women of our company amazed us—"

Luke 24:22 RSV

PART I.

THE WINDOW

A telephone call came in the late 1980s from the United Methodist Church of the Tarrytowns in Westchester County, New York. At the time I was serving as archivist of the New York Conference of the United Methodist Church.

The person calling was quite excited to report that a stained glass window had been found in a crate in an obscure basement area of their church. The window was in honor of Anna Howard Shaw's ordination as a Methodist minister on October 12, 1880. I recognized the name as being one of the first women ordained in the Methodist Church.

The caller asked if I knew of a place that would like to have the window. I immediately thought of our General Archives and History Commission at Drew University, Madison, New Jersey. It houses our national Methodist archives. I made a call to Drew, but the reply was negative...no room. In the meantime, word had reached the Northeastern Jurisdiction Archives and History Commission and the Anna Howard Shaw Center at Boston University School of Theology. The people there were delighted to learn about the window's existence.

The trustees of the Church of the Tarrytowns were happy to deed over Anna's window to the School of Theology. Ms. Lee Carpenter, a member of the Center's board, took upon herself the window project...a big one, for some of the stained glass was shattered and the lead was torn. I clipped the article with the picture of the dedication from the Vol. 2, Pentecost 1989 Vision, our Conference newspaper, and put it in the folder with the rest of my Anna Howard Shaw information; 'case closed,' or so I thought.

A year ago (20 years later) when my clergyman husband was going

to be away Sunday, March 1st, I decided to fill in for him at our little country church and celebrate "Women's History Month." I looked in the folder by the same name and found the information on Anna Howard Shaw. She was the person I chose to use. Off to the local library I went to supplement the material I already had. A staff member was very helpful in going online for me since, at that time, I was computer illiterate. There was plenty of information available on Anna which I gathered, but I continued to search for clues concerning the window. I wanted to know when it was installed in the Beekman Avenue Methodist Protestant Church of North Tarrytown, New York, who gave the window, how did it end up in the United Methodist Church of the Tarrytowns' basement at 27 South Washington Street in Tarrytown, New York.

For Christmas 2009, my husband gave me Don Brown's children's story of Anna Howard Shaw, "A Voice From The Wilderness." He also presented me with Beverly Zink-Sawyer's book, "From Preachers To Suffragists." There, on pages 237-238, was the answer to my first question. The window was dedicated December 12, 1926, at the Beekman Avenue Church. A footnote in the book indicated the author's source was the Methodist Recorder, January 1, 1927. I was ecstatic! I would write to the General Commission on Archives and History of the United Methodist Church located at Drew University, Madison, New Jersey to see if they had the periodical.

When the copy came, "Dr. Anna Howard Shaw" was the cover story, with her likeness, a photo of the pastor and the Beekman Avenue Church. The article was written by Rev. Caroline Bartlett Crane, LLD, who had given the address the day the window was dedicated. I recognized the name as the person who had conducted Anna's funeral service at the deceased's home in Moylan, Pennsylvania, in July of 1919. She had also served under Anna's leadership during World War I on the Women's Committee of the United States Council of National Defense. On the day of the dedication of the window, Caroline was wearing Anna's pulpit robe, which had been passed on to her.

Two parts of Rev. Caroline Bartlett Crane's message stand out

in my memory, the first being the fact that the donor of the window is not mentioned by name, only alluded to as "a niece of Susan B. Anthony" who had an accident on her way to the dedication service and was resting in a hotel room in New York City. Neither is her name mentioned in the Tarrytown Press-Record of December 17, 1926, other than as a niece of Susan B. Anthony. The donor, Miss Lucy Elmina Anthony, was Anna's secretary and companion for 30 years.

The other part of the memorial message that lingered in my mind, I'll quote:

"So future generations—especially future generations of women—will turn, not to the place where Anne Hutchinson stood at the bar of excommunication, or where defenseless women accused of witchcraft were burned to death; they will turn, instead, to a spot like this where, near half a century ago, a young woman with the love of God in her heart, and a truly celestial fire of eloquence on her tongue, was given by the spiritual forefathers of the men and women now present her free charter to go forth and preach the gospel of good tidings to all men."

The greater part of Rev. Mrs. Crane's speech was dedicated to Anna's life.

The people gathered that day in the Beekman Avenue Church could never have imagined what was to become of the beautiful stained glass window depicting "The Annunciation," which had been lovingly unveiled by two of Anna's nieces, Miss Nicolas Shaw Fraser and Miss Lois M.B. Greene.

In 1928, John D. Rockefeller, Jr. was asked by the Chamber of Commerce of Tarrytown, New York, to build a five story apartment complex in the area of North Tarrytown to house Chevrolet auto manufacturing families. The location Mr. Rockefeller chose was the

Beekman Avenue  
Methodist Protestant Church  
N. Tarrytown, N.Y.

←  
courtesy of

The Historical Society Serving  
Sleepy Hollow and Tarrytown.

Beekman Methodist Protestant Church  
127 Depeyster St.  
N. Tarrytown, N.Y.

←  
courtesy of

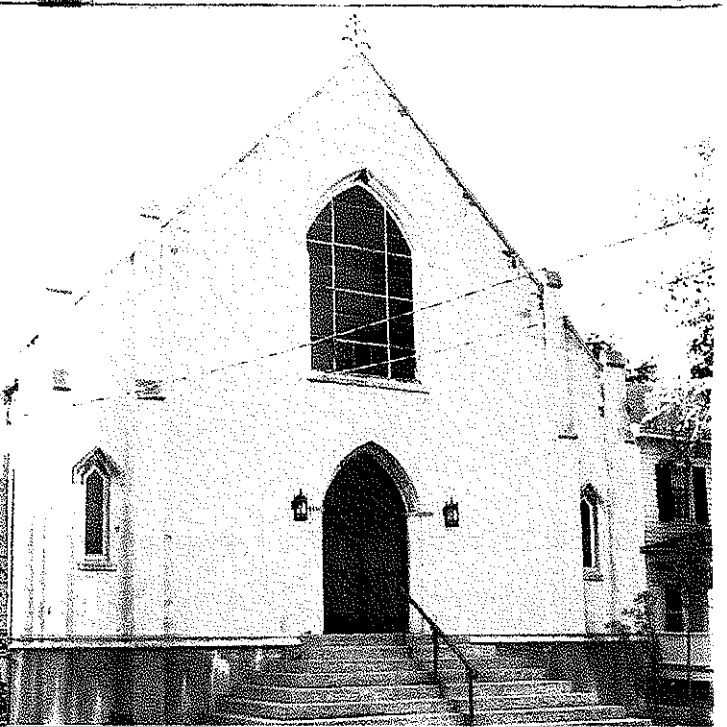
The Historical Society Serving  
Sleepy Hollow and Tarrytown.



CHURCHES OF THE TARRYTOWNS  
THAT HOUSED ANNA'S WINDOW.



Photo by Sean Roach



← United Methodist Church of the Tarrytowns  
27 S. Washington St., Tarrytown, N.Y.

property at the corner of Beekman Avenue and Pocantico Road, which included the Methodist Protestant Church at 95 Beekman Avenue.

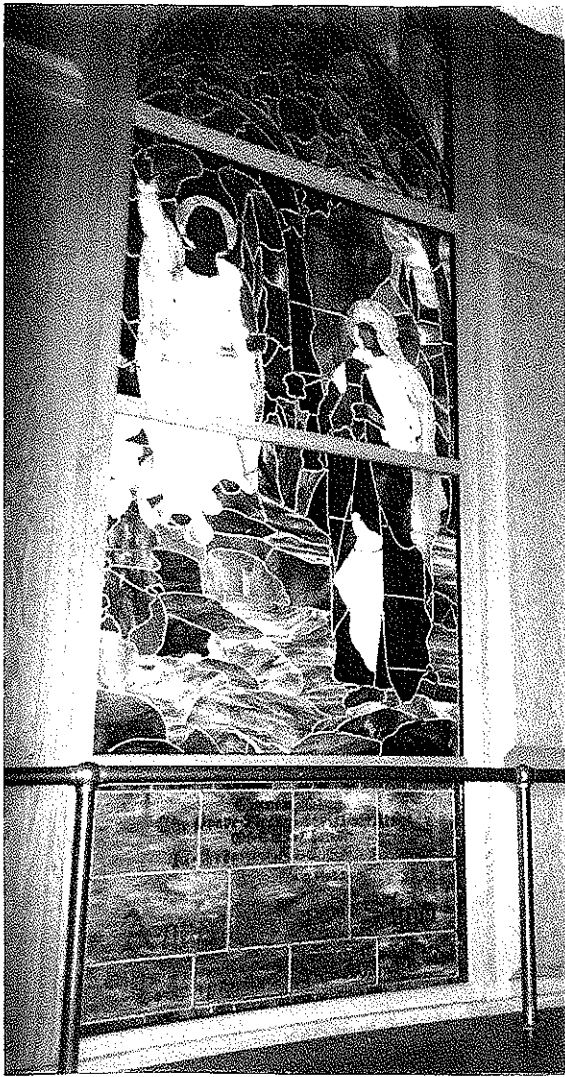
Mrs. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, John D., Jr.'s wife, chose the name "The Van Tassel Apartments," after a character, Katrina Van Tassel, in Washington Irving's story "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow."

Of course, it meant that the Beekman Avenue Methodist Protestant Church had to be torn down. With the money the trustees received from the transaction with John D. Rockefeller, Jr., they erected a new church building at 127 Depeyster Street in North Tarrytown. A church bulletin at "The Historical Society Serving Sleepy Hollow and Tarrytown" indicates that the new building, known as Beekman Methodist Protestant Church, was dedicated Sunday, June 9, 1929. According to an article in the Daily News of March 12, 1937, re: the history of the Beekman Avenue Church, "The window, as well as the organ and other equipment, was removed to the new building on Depeyster Street..."

I recently spoke, via telephone, with Rev. Ralph E. Spoor, Jr., who was pastor of Asbury Methodist Church in Tarrytown, now United Methodist Church of the Tarrytowns. He was serving the Asbury Methodist Church when First Methodist Church of North Tarrytown and the former merged at Asbury in 1957. (In 1939, the three branches of Methodism -- Methodist Episcopal, Methodist Episcopal, South and the Methodist Protestant Churches united to form the Methodist Church. In 1964 the Evangelical United Brethren and the Methodist merged to form the United Methodist Church.)

The former First Methodist Church building of North Tarrytown became the Roman Catholic Church of the Immaculate Conception. Today the building has been converted into a condominium.

Rev. Mr. Spoor recalled that the Depeyster Street building was quite modern-looking and he doubted that Anna's 12' X 4' window would have been used in that building. It probably remained in its crate. My thought is that the window would have been inappropriate, due to the inscription in the stained glass at the base of the window:



BOSTON  
UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL  
OF  
THEOLOGY



photos by W. R. Porter, Jr.



ANNA'S WINDOW

\*\*\*\*\*

UNITED  
METHODIST  
HISTORIC

SITE

#264



ANNA HOWARD  
WINDOW  
DEDICATED FEBRUARY 1901  
GIFT OF  
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
OF THE TARRYTOWNS

"Commemorating the brave, strong stand of this church in ordaining Anna Howard Shaw, whom other churches persistently refused to ordain.

October 12, 1880"

Evidently the window remained in the crate for 28 years at 127 Depeyster Street and then went with the congregation to Asbury Church in 1957. It would have been stored in their basement or undercroft another 31 years before being discovered and, thus, the phone call to me at the New York Conference Archives in 1988.

After restoration, Anna's window was installed, surrounded by wooden panels, in the stairwell between the 1st and 2nd floors of the School of Theology building. The significance of its placement is that Anna collapsed from poor nutrition in a stairwell on her way to a 3rd floor class in the original building of the School of Theology on Bromfield Street. Female students were discriminated against and were given less allowance for food and had to find their own lodging.

On February 28, 1989, the Anna Howard Shaw window was dedicated at Boston University School of Theology. Among those present were two representatives from the United Methodist Church of the Tarrytowns--the current pastor, Rev. Vicky A. Fleming and Ms. Grace Imray who had discovered Anna's window in a crate in their church's basement.

Last October, my husband took me to Boston to see Anna's window and to visit the Anna Howard Shaw Center, both located at the Boston University School of Theology, 745 Commonwealth Avenue. The colors of the stained glass stand out, illuminated from behind artificially. For the past 21 years, the window, and the descriptive plaques surrounding it have been an inspiration, especially to the women who choose to serve through Christian ministry.



## HONORS ANNA RECEIVED

1917 Kansas City (Missouri) University, a Methodist Protestant college conferred on Anna an honorary L.L.D. degree and an honorary D.D. degree in 1902.

1918, Dec. 15, Anna was sworn in as a special member of the Washington, D.C. Police Force and received a badge. It was the result of her having mentioned that she had wanted to be a policewoman since she had lived for 3 years in Boston's back alleys.

1919 Anna received an honorary degree from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro where she gave the commencement address. Shaw residence is named for her.

1919, May 12 Anna was the first woman to earn the Distinguished Service Medal awarded to her by Congress for services performed during World War I. It was given to her by Newton D. Baker in his office at the War Department in Washington, D.C.

## REMEMBERING ANNA

1919 Bryn Mawr College established an ongoing lecture series in Dr. Anna Howard Shaw's honor. A plaque in the cloisters commemorates her accomplishments. A memorial fund, in her memory, was created to benefit suffrage movements.

1922 Anna Howard Shaw Middle School 5400  
Washington Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA.

Anna Howard Shaw Elementary School  
Public School 061 New York City

1930 A bronze plaque on a 3 ton rock was placed near the high school Anna attended in Big Rapids, Michigan, but was moved to Mecosta County Historical Museum and rededicated September 7, 2000.

To the honor  
and happy memory of  
Anna Howard Shaw  
Distinguished daughter of  
The State of Michigan  
Pioneer resident of  
The City of Big Rapids  
World citizen

The town of Ashton, Michigan has a monument commemorating Anna where she preached her first sermon. It's located in Frayer Halladay Park. "She cut a path through tangled underwood of old traditions to broader ways."

Osceola County

1940s The "SS Anna Howard Shaw" was built and launched during World War II by the New England Building Company of Portland, Maine.

1978 Anna Howard Shaw Center was established at Boston University School of Theology. On February 14th, Anna's birthday, a special celebration is held.

1983 Anna was inducted into Michigan's Women's Hall of Fame.

1985 Anna Howard Shaw Women's Studies Center opened at Albion College, MI.

1988 October. A life-size bronze statue of Anna Howard Shaw stands in a park north of the Big Rapids Community Library on South Michigan Avenue. The creators of the statue were Lloyd Randell and his wife, Renee.

1989 Anna Howard Shaw, along with Anna Snowden Oliver, were elected posthumously as full members of the former Southern New England Conference of the United Methodist Church.

1994 The Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of the United Methodist Church chose to name their 7 districts after important personages in Methodism and Anna was one of them. Around 2000 it was discontinued but the East District of today bears a trace of Anna's name: Internet [www.gb-gm-umc.org/AHShaw](http://www.gb-gm-umc.org/AHShaw)

2000 October. Anna was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame at Seneca Falls, New York, birthplace of women's rights.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Ms. Frances Bristol, Reference Archivist, The General Commission on Archives and History, United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 127, Madison, NJ, 07940.

Mr. Andrew Campbell, Clerk at Mahopac Public Library, 668 Route Six, Mahopac, NY 10541.

Ms. Kara Jackman, Archivist and Research Collections Coordinator, Boston University School of Theology Library, 745 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, MA 02215.

Mr. John Kennedy, Media-Upper Providence Free Library, One East Front Street, Media, PA 19013-2911.

Ms. Clarita Anderman Krall, District Resource Assistant, East District, Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Ms. Sara Mascia, Curator, The Historical Society Serving Sleepy Hollow and Tarrytown, One Grove Street, Tarrytown, NY, 10591.

Rev. Ralph E. Spoor, Jr., retired United Methodist pastor who served Asbury Methodist Church at the time of the merger with First Methodist Church of N. Tarrytown in 1957.

Members of Mahopac Writers Group who have read and critiqued my manuscript; especially Ms. Dana Chipkin for editing.

Rev. Willett R. Porter, Jr., my husband who has transported me to Writers Group and other places like the Tarrytowns and Boston!

Ms. Mary Robinson, Archivist, New York Conference Center of the United Methodist Church, 20 Soundview Avenue, White Plains, New York, 10606.

Mr. Ross Porter, my son, for helping with the manuscript cover.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- "American National Biography," Volume 19, Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 736-37.
- Andrew, Elizabeth J., "On the Threshold," Westview (Perseus), 2005, pp. 423-24;29.
- Brown, Don, "A Voice from the Wilderness, the Story of Anna Howard Shaw," Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 2001.
- Canning, Jeff and Buxton, Wally, "History of the Tarrytowns, Westchester County, N.Y." Harbor Hill Books, 1975.
- "Encyclopedia Americana," Volume 24, 1971, page 664.
- "Encyclopedia of Women in the United States," Keenan, Sheita, Scholastic Inc., New York, N.Y., 555 B'way, 1996.
- Scharf, J. Thomas, "History of Westchester County, New York," Volume II, Philadelphia: L.E. Preston & Co., 1886, page 300.
- Shaw, Anna Howard, "Story of a Pioneer," (written by Elizabeth Garber Jordan from interviews with Anna Howard Shaw), Harper & Bros. Publications, 1915. Reprinted in 1994 as William Bradford Collection Edition by Pilgrim Press.
- Simpson, Matthew, "Cyclopedia of Methodism," Louis H. Everts, Philadelphia, 1880.
- "Who Was Who In America," Volume I, 1897-1942, Marquis Publications, Chicago, 1968.
- Zink-Sawyer, Beverly, "From Preachers to Suffragists," Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville-London, 1989.
- Publications:
- Carpenter, (Ms.) Lee, "Anna's Window Is On Its Way To Boston," Anna Howard Shaw Center Newsletters, Boston School of Theology, Winter 1988, Vol. 4, No. 2.
- Crane, Rev. Caroline Bartlett, "Anna Howard Shaw," Methodist Recorder, Volume LXXXVIII, Pittsburgh, PA, Jan. 1, 1927, pp. 6-9.
- "1st M.P. (Methodist Protestant) Church Founded in '31 (1831)," Daily News, Mar. 12, 1937.
- Official Journal (of the) New York Annual Conference of the Methodist Church, 1957, p. 70.
- Parker, Rev. Clinton, "Pioneer Preacher," Cape Cod Life, Winter 1986, pp. 132--.
- Stalnaker Roth, Bonny, "Honoring a Pioneer," Interpreter, Feb.-Mar. 1997, pp. 23-25.
- "Tarrytown Church Representatives Attend Window Dedication at Boston University," Vision, Volume 2, Pentecost 1989, p. 6.
- "Unveil Window in Honor of Late Dr. Shaw," Tarrytown Press Record, Dec. 17, 1926.