

# From Grave to Cradle: The Many Lives of Frances Willard's Journals

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## Introduction

In July 2012, the Frances Willard Historical Association/ Willard Library & Archives (Evanston, IL) received a grant from the Illinois SHRAB to digitize and make available on line the transcribed journals of Frances Willard... bringing new life to a document that had been essentially inaccessible—indeed, presumed lost—since soon after Willard's death.



Frances E. Willard (1839-1898) earned an international reputation as a social reformer, most notably for her leadership of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), the largest and most powerful woman's organization of its time. As president (1879-1898), Willard built the WCTU into a force for

reforms that included woman suffrage, social justice, and world peace. Her speeches and writings inspired and empowered women everywhere.

## Opening a New Page in Willard's Journal

The screenshots show the website interface with a search bar, a list of journals, and a detailed view of a journal page with a 'READ' button.

## Why This Project?

- ❖ Feasible for Willard Archives (no staff, no funds)
- ❖ Builds on previous lives, existing resources
- ❖ Sustainable
- ❖ High research value

## Bringing the Journals to Life

This collage illustrates the project's workflow. It shows original handwritten journal pages, their corresponding transcribed text, and screenshots of the digital interface. The interface includes a 'Transcribed' label, a 'BROWSE' section with a table of journals, and a 'Journal Sections' list. The interface also shows a 'BROWSE' section with a table of journals and a 'Journal Sections' list.

## The Lives of the Journals

Date	Status	Access
1855-1896	Willard fills 50+ journals	Personal; 1889 autobiography
1898-c1931	At WCTU HQ in Evanston	Occasional
1931-1982	Believed lost or destroyed	None
1982	Rediscovered; Filmed by NHPRC	1 site (per WorldCat)
1982-1990	Transcribed by Carolyn Gifford	Minimal
1995	Writing Out My Heart published	Excerpts only
1995-2012	Awareness of originals & transcriptions	On site researchers only
2013	Transcription digitized/online	Global

The screenshot shows the 'BROWSE' section of the website, which includes a table of journals and a list of journal sections.

- **Journal Sections:**
- ❖ Early Life (1855-1857)
  - ❖ Evanston (1859-1868)
  - ❖ Travel Journals (1868-1870)
  - ❖ WCTU and Later Life (1875-1896)

## Looking Forward

### The Willard Journals Project:

- ❖ Enhanced subject searching
- ❖ Linking to original journals
- ❖ Additional collateral material

### Frances Willard Historical Association:

- ❖ A growing body of accessible primary sources relating to Frances Willard/WCTU history
- ❖ Credibility for future grants to preserve and provide access to these resources

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