



603-661-9826 • PO Box 995, Concord NH 03302 • info@nhwomensheritagetrail.org

Two Brief Biographical Sketches



Celia Laighton Thaxter (1835-1894)

was born in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and lived most of her life at the Isles of Shoals. She was a poet and essayist of the nineteenth-century 'Aesthetic Movement'. At 16, the writer married Levi Thaxter and moved to the mainland. Later, while living in Newtonville, Massachusetts, she wrote "Land Locked," a poem expressing her longing for the ocean; the poem's success brought her into Boston literary society. Unhappy in her marriage and away from her island, Thaxter spent summers in her house on Appledore Island where she wrote, gardened and painted, while hosting noted artists and writers who vacationed there. Thaxter's work is linked to what we now call ecofeminism; her four books of poetry and numerous essays often consider the connections between gender and the natural world.



Harriet Adams Wilson (1825-1900)

was born Harriet E. Adams in Milford, New Hampshire, to a European-American mother and an African-American father. She is the author of *Our Nig: Or, Sketches from the Life of a Free Black, In A Two-Story White House, North* (1859), believed to be the first novel published by an African-American woman. Wilson's autobiographical novel describes the life of an abused 'mulatto' child and her forced servitude at the hands of northerners, thus opening up questions of slavery and complicity in the North. Harriet married Thomas Wilson in 1851 and gave birth to a son, George, in 1852. Poverty stricken after her husband's disappearance, Wilson wrote *Our Nig* to support herself and her child. George, however, died the next year and Wilson also disappeared from local record books. Researchers uncovered her life in Massachusetts as a spiritualist and medium, which lasted another thirty years before her death in the city of Quincy. She is buried there in Mount Wollaston Cemetery.

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