

ROUGHING IT IN TORONTO:  
CAROLINE DALL'S DEVELOPMENT, 1851-1854  
by Irene Baros-Johnson, May 2008

After a delightful journey on the bright blue water of Lake Ontario, Caroline Dall arrived in Toronto on May 8th, 1851. With their young son Willy and baby Lily, twenty-nine year old "Carrie" was accompanied by the Rev. Charles Dall, who had become the minister of the small Unitarian Church in December.

Several times a week, Caroline Dall wrote in her about her life in her journal, as she had done for two decades. Thus, it is possible to gain some impression of events written at the time Caroline Dall experienced them in Toronto. She also wrote letters, some of which were printed by liberal religious periodicals.

Caroline Dall arrived at a very good time, for the city of Toronto was enjoying an economic boom. Expanding communities in the northeastern United States and pioneer building further west meant that there was a ready market for Canadian pine. The area's wheat was in demand in Great Britain and elsewhere. Finally, railroad lines were to be built.<sup>i</sup> It was such a prosperous period that Dall saw many new edifices. Nearly all the buildings lost in the Great Fire of 1849 were being replaced. She noted, "Never have I seen so many churches, houses, and so on, going up in any place..."<sup>ii</sup>

For a month, Caroline Dall worked on making a house fit for habitation. She eliminated mice but bugs were harder to get rid of in her son's room. If she had only known how hard it was to obtain, she would have sent furniture ahead. Suitable chairs were too costly. Fine teacups were unobtainable. Since goods coming from Liverpool, England, as well as the United States bore high customs duties, she was informed that everything from abroad was expensive (this was before Lord Elgin secured a free market deal for the Canadas by lubricating U.S. legislators).

So far from the sea, olive oil instead of whale oil was used for lamps, though people of limited means, like herself, used candles. It was hard to find rye flour. In this city, dressmakers did not come to the house. The English ribbons available were of poor quality.

Already the author of a collection of essays, Dall seems to have brought to her new city an unusual forthrightness for a woman. In Toronto, she soon made new friends, attended many Parliamentary sessions in the capital of the Canadas (where she understood French when it was spoken), and went to other important events. She noticed that "People here do not care much for appearances, not even those who drive four horses..."

Born in 1822, Caroline Wells Healey Dall was the eldest daughter of a Boston merchant. As such, eighteen-year-old Caroline Healey attended the festivities when Haligonian Samuel Cunard opened his mail packet run from Liverpool, England to Halifax, Nova Scotia. On June 3, 1840 the *Unicorn* arrived in Boston. The elegantly gilded vessel was well-decorated with flowers, but Dall was impressed by the steamer's compact features such as its hinged washbowls. She was shocked, however, that the celebrated new transatlantic ship seemed so dirty after its transatlantic journey. From the balcony at Boston's Maverick House, where women were allowed to view the proceedings, she attended the Cunard dinner on July 21st. A childhood acquaintance on whose knee she had been dandled, she records that the great politician Daniel Webster delivered a speech that was eloquent but blundering - probably from both tiredness and drink.<sup>iii</sup>

Caroline was highly educated for a woman. She had attended several schools and had been trained in modern languages by her father. She partook of his library and that of other men willing to nurture her brightness, in the days before colleges admitted women. She frequented lecture series in Boston despite the cost of admission. She went to graduation ceremonies and other events at Harvard to hear thoughtful speeches.

A year after Boston's Cunard events, Caroline was invited by Elizabeth Palmer Peabody to join the 1841 "Conversations" on mythology offered by the well-educated and brilliant teacher Margaret Fuller.<sup>iv</sup> Nineteen-year-old Caroline made notes of what she understood of the sessions, which included men such as Ralph Waldo Emerson.<sup>v</sup> In the meantime, Caroline Healey appreciated the opportunity to better know an exceptional intellectual group of at least thirteen women, particularly Peabody, once a teacher of young children who ran a bookstore and operated a circulating library of foreign books. She encouraged Caroline to wear glasses to avoid nearsighted mistakes and tried to stem the young lady's presumptuousness.<sup>vi</sup>

Later in Canada, Dall would speak of Margaret Fuller, both with Unitarians and during her travels. While living in Toronto, Dall received Fuller's *Memoirs* on March 11, 1852. It was a memorial book assembled after Fuller's tragic 1850 death. Feeling isolated as an intellectual woman with writing aspirations, Caroline Dall found many parallels between her life and that of the famous Transcendentalist and woman reporter. In contrast, while reading the biography of Mary Ware, a minister's wife, Dall felt stultified.

When Elizabeth Peabody arrived in Toronto on a visit, Dall arranged for her to see

Superintendent of Education Egerton Ryerson. He had traveled throughout the British Isles and Europe seeking workable ideas to reform the educational system of Canada West.<sup>vii</sup> No doubt Peabody shared experiences from teaching in Bronson Alcott's school as well as awareness gained from her brother-in-law Horace Mann, Egerton's American counterpart. Caroline Dall enjoyed hearing Miss Peabody lecture at the Normal School that afternoon.<sup>viii</sup>

Before arriving in Toronto, Caroline Dall's experience had also been practical. She had been co-operator of Boston's first children's nursery for working mothers. She also composed lessons for the Sunday School of West Church, where she went to weekly meetings of the teachers and engaged in spirited discussions.<sup>ix</sup> As a Sunday School teacher, it was her duty to visit the houses of students monthly, particularly when they were absent - for they might be sick or in some sort of distress.<sup>x</sup> As she pursued such serious pursuits, Caroline found it distressing that her parents cared more about which ball-gown she wore.

When her father experienced an economic downturn, Caroline Dall was old enough to teach and serve as vice-principal for two years at a school for young ladies in Georgetown, near Washington, D.C., from 1842-1844. It was this she wrote of in *The Snowdrop*, the first magazine for children produced in Canada. This means that she was in contact with the Foster sisters of Montreal, known for their Boston contacts and for revitalizing the Unitarian Church in their Canadian city.<sup>xi</sup> In Washington, D.C., Caroline Dall actually experienced slavery, for it was legal in her nation's capitol and she taught freedmen in the area.

Parental pressure to abstain from acting on anti-slavery impulses while Dall was a young woman was considerable.<sup>xii</sup> This continued in Toronto despite passage of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, with her father refusing to bestow any money on the couple in Toronto unless she agreed not to act on her feelings.<sup>xiii</sup> For a long time, Caroline felt hurt by this rift between them, with its possible consequence of non-communication with her mother.<sup>xiv</sup> Though she denied that she was an abolitionist, Dall strove to alleviate slavery's ill effects upon Toronto. The city was flooded with fugitive slaves arriving daily. At the request of Sam May, Jr., Francis Jackson, and Wendell Phillips, who were officers of the Massachusetts Abolitionist Society, Dall received funds raised in the northeastern U.S. to distribute to fugitives who had not yet secured jobs.<sup>xv</sup> She saw many of the new arrivals as quality servants, badly needed by city residents. She secured a maid for Mrs. Kane, the artist's pregnant wife. She was appalled when a congregant assumed that a former slave who was her servant would be

available for his affection.

United in their anti-slavery views, the Dalls quickly became friends with Rev. Samuel Ringgold Ward and on Sunday night January 4th, 1851, he seems to have been the first black minister to preach in a Canadian Unitarian pulpit, in Toronto. She was one of the few white faces present when Ward addressed the August 1st service celebrating the 1834 freeing of slaves in the British Empire and she appreciated his sense of history. With satisfaction, Caroline Dall wrote in her journal, “Sam Ward preached for us tonight and I was very much delighted with his frank religious manly tone.” A couple of years later, Caroline Dall arranged for an enlightening afternoon since “Old James Robinson spoke to the Sunday School of his life in Slavery.”<sup>xvi</sup>

Regularly attending meetings of the Anti-Slavery Society of Toronto, Caroline Dall offered advice several times, priced items for an anti-slavery fair, and thought Frederick Douglass’s speech at an anniversary meeting less fiery than one heard another time that she had seen him.

Also a fervent abolitionist, the radical Theodore Parker had become an influence on Caroline Healey even before she introduced her father to him and he became one of Parker’s sponsors. She first heard the New England minister on April 4th, 1841, a week before he became a controversial theological figure because of his sermon, “The Transient and the Permanent in Christianity.”<sup>xvii</sup> They conversed and sometimes exchanged letters in which Caroline Healey detailed her sense of spiritual development - she found herself a doubter at nine years of age.<sup>xviii</sup> She was an early appreciator of the humanism in Parker’s preaching and declared herself of similar mind, despite the prospect of unpopularity among her peers and older Unitarians.<sup>xix</sup>

Caroline had engaged in church visiting, one of several endeavors in which she was inspired by the dedication of Joseph Tuckerman's Boston work with the poor.<sup>xx</sup> Indeed, she had met her husband in the South while he conducted a Tuckerman-type of ministry in Baltimore, Maryland. His theology was more mainstream than her decidedly advanced views.

Attendance rose from twenty-five, doubled, tripled, and then reached one hundred at worship services followed the arrival of the Dalls in Toronto. In the first year of their ministry, “fourteen children and one adult were dedicated to God.” In a letter to a religious periodical, Caroline Dall observed that the Unitarian faith was not merely inherited but chosen, despite religious bigotry, social opposition and its minority status:

Our people here interest me deeply. Few of them are Canadians. Most of them were born in England,

Ireland, or Scotland;..Our little band is composed of those who know whereof they affirm. Through hard study, and serious experiences of life, through some martyrdoms even, for the sake of the faith, they have arrived at their present convictions. They may be depended upon.<sup>xxi</sup>

As minister, she noted that the Rev, Charles Dall did “much to soften the asperities and bitter feelings of other religious denominations toward us, as well as to strengthen and build up his own church.<sup>xxii</sup> He delivered a series of “controversial lectures.” With the presence of the new minister and his wife, communion was occasionally celebrated. On some Sunday mornings, Caroline Dall heard “the most delicious singing, [it] filled my heart with delight.<sup>xxiii</sup> After the evening worship service on Sunday, the Dalls hosted members and others at their home for fellowship and thoughtful interchanges on various themes.

On one occasion, her active participation in the evening of conversation caused some dissension with her husband. After their company departed, Charles Dall said to his wife, “I cannot help wishing that when you lead conversation as you did tonight, you had the rare tact not to seem to lead.<sup>xxiv</sup> Thus the appreciative attention of church member John Patton was welcome. He soon lived as a boarder in the Dall house, accompanied her to many teas and social events, and became an object of deep affection limited only by her respect for her marital status.<sup>xxv</sup> This association did cause some talk among church members.<sup>xxvi</sup>

Within six months of her arrival in Toronto, Caroline Dall's Sunday School class expanded from four teachers with fourteen students to nine teachers with forty students.<sup>xxvii</sup> Later there were sixty-five students, including some children whose parents were not Unitarian. At least one Sunday School picnic was enjoyed.

Though lapsed members returned and new members were attracted by this activity, the church suffered during the Dalls' first year some membership loss caused “by the removal of the seat of government” to Montreal. Despite this setback, Caroline Dall happily wrote, “We are constantly winning

new members, and rousing new inquiries. Our books and tracts are eagerly sought...<sup>xxviii</sup> There were 160 volumes in the library which Dall tended, believing “The taste of the rising generation is determined in a great measure by the books which you select for the parish library.”<sup>xxix</sup> During the winter of 1851, Caroline Dall led discussions in a well-attended History class on the classic period. Dall wrote that an indication of the church’s success was that it was warned against from at least two other pulpits.<sup>xxx</sup>

After reading one of Dall’s articles describing the progress of the church, Olivia Dabner wrote from Fayal in the Azores, “you are getting on so well, and I’m so encouraged by the success with which your efforts have been crowned. I trust nothing will occur to dampen your ardor.”<sup>xxxi</sup>

Shortly after the church’s founding in 1845, Toronto's George Street house of worship had been, in her words, "a disagreeable looking, repulsive old wooden building on a back street and some distance from the main thoroughfare."<sup>xxxii</sup> In 1852, the Rev. John Corder of the Montreal Church, urged the building of a new church in Toronto during a pulpit exchange with Rev. Dall. The church in Montreal, which had been the first Unitarian body established in Canada, gave a subscription of 100 pounds.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

Though signed by three Trustees, Caroline Dall appears to have written the circular letter detailing the history, present circumstances and prospects of the Toronto church that was printed. Mr. Dall was sent by the Trustees to Montreal and New England to request aid for the new building from individuals and Unitarian societies. From January to April 1853, Rev. Dall visited about twenty-eight congregations in the United States and raised \$2,000. Since Caroline Dall wrote personal letters about the ministry and her family to accompany the copies of the circular which she sent out, it is remembered that, "About \$900 was secured through the personal efforts of the Minister's wife."<sup>xxxiv</sup>

Fund-raising activities for the new building included Caroline Dall sewing and selling linen shirts for a church fair. She recalled learning this skill from Ruth and Martha Twing on Hancock Street in Boston at eight years of age. She wrote, “I had reason to remember their teaching gratefully when, in 1853,

I was again making linen shirts, in order to supply bricks and mortar to the rising walls of Jarvis Street church in Toronto. <sup>xxxv</sup> Full of energy and perseverance, the Toronto church group of twenty met once a week. Not ladies of leisure, they were “chiefly people who knit and sew for their own livelihood. <sup>xxxvi</sup>

It is remarkable how busy Caroline Dall was with sewing for her family, securing a suitable servant and cook, and how much she accomplished in her writing, since her journals indicate that she was often ill or felt distressed. The initial instance of misery was on her first nights in Toronto. Hosted by an ordinary family belonging to the church, the Dalls were given livingroom lodgings without, until asked for, the warmth and comfort of a fire. Clearly, Caroline was accustomed to better quarters. Her high standard of cleanliness also seems to have caused her discomfort at times. On March 11, 1852, Dall confided to her journal, “Whenever I go to a new family I am freshly astounded at the want of refinement and dirt. How can I teach the people here a belief in the refinement of cleanliness.”

As a writer, Dall engaged in the literary genre of travel writing since she was experiencing circumstances new to her. Describing special events in significant detail, she was less than respectful of her surroundings, more judgmental within her articles than in her journal. In an 1852 letter to *The Monthly Religious Magazine*, she described the Provincial Fair that met that year in Toronto. She celebrated the excellent artwork and wide variety of livestock she saw. But having gone on People’s Day, she felt crowded and concluded that the event was “badly managed.” She opined, “I have often observed since I came to the Province, that womanhood, in order to be respected, must be preceded by a footman and lights - quite unnecessary accompaniments in the United States. <sup>xxxvii</sup>

In the same article, she featured the dedication of the Normal School. In her journal she had found it impressive, but in print speeches at the ceremony were termed “supremely stupid.” She noted, “Only the Chief Justice read a gentlemanly finished address...” In her letter to the editor, she commented, “This place used to be called ‘muddy York:’ changing its name has not changed its nature, and the Model School is closed until the city authorities create side-walks and crossings to the new buildings.” She had experienced “wooden causeways thrown across a street.”

Missing the simplicity of Harvard ceremonies, in another article Caroline Dall mocked the plethora of colours and shapes of faculty academic regalia in the University graduation procession. She ridiculed examination questions asked on the occasion, found politenesses expressed “the most degrading subserviency,” and described pupil themes as “badly read.”<sup>xxxviii</sup> Accustomed to the latest French fashions favored in the United States, she found some of the clothing she saw in Toronto too bright and quaint. Within the confines of her journal, she found dresses worn at one concert “odd” and the next year found them improved.<sup>xxxix</sup> In print, she described outfits worn by children as having “broad belts and buckles and short waists with which they were represented in the old editions of Mother Goose.” Similarly, modes of transport seemed “funny,” since stagecoaches raised high in the air “just as if they had sprung out of Charles Lamb’s nursery-books in Threadneedle-street, where they were faithfully engraved long years ago.”<sup>xl</sup> Thus presentations of local colour often amounted to disparaging comment about current events. In writing for a U.S. audience, she neglected to think that her matter would be read by locals and neglected to moderate her language, as she had advised others to do lest they be misunderstood. Caroline Dall’s exacting standards appeared as indiscrete bluntness and verged on offensiveness. These first impressions seem to have had a lasting impact as they apparently it disturbed at least a few sensitivities when this material was read in Toronto by some members. Such detail usually preceded informative descriptions of church activities in Caroline Dall’s letters to religious periodicals.

In mid-February 1853, Caroline Dall heard that a change of location for the projected church was being discussed. On February 21st, there was a Trustees meeting and Caroline wrote in her journal, “I had a good deal to do with starting this meeting privately...” In addition to John Patton, she often spoke with the Chairman, Champion Brown, who often visited Sunday night and whose wife was in the sewing circle.

Dorothea Dix, the mental health reformer, descended on the Dalls in the middle of November and renewed her faint acquaintance with Caroline. She gained reluctant access to the Insane Asylum from Dr. Workman, who seemed displeased by her sudden visit and her unrealistic plans for an asylum in Nova Scotia. Dall notes that Dix did manage to speak encouragingly to the caring nurses.

Unknown to the minister, there was a meeting of the Trustees on November 17, 1853 at which five

Trustees withdrew pledges of one hundred pounds apiece in favor of Dr. Joseph Workman's grander plan to loan money to the congregation and to mortgage the church. Alarmed, Caroline Dall tried to forestall the proceedings the next day, since money contributed to build the new church had usually been obtained with the promise of incurring no debt. Resisting the possibility of the church community "falling into [Dr. Workman's] power," she composed a church circular, which her husband copied, to inform the congregation of these events. She wrote letters in an attempt to raise alternative money.

When she went to church that Sunday, Caroline Dall felt misunderstood, as her distress was interpreted by some members as anger. On November 25, the Dalls received "a violent unchristian letter" from Dr. Workman and at least one Trustee tried to persuade others of the rightness of the Workman point of view. In December, the move to refinance the church seemed to be led by five men at a meeting. Not concurring with a resolution to commend the minister for his course of action in the issue, Dr. Workman instead asked for a general one approving of the minister's piety. Of course, Caroline Dall viewed this action as insincere. Of this Trustee meeting on December 15, Dall learned "all the votes expunged - no records left." She felt that a letter Charles Dall sent to Joseph Workman, without consulting her, had been inadequately worded and thus weakened his position.

The church dispute had a negative effect on other events. Though 40 to 50 came to the Dalls' Christmas party, including 20 children, the next day Caroline "Thought of many children who ought to have been here and were not." On New Year's Day, "there was thinner attendance than for a long time." Caroline Dall learned that there was an accusation that she favored American rather than British members of the congregation. After giving it consideration, Caroline Dall thought herself innocent of the charge.

Attempts by Rev. Dall to be conciliatory were rebuffed by Dr. Workman. He saw no need to apologize for any disrespect of the minister, since his view was that clergy was not supposed to be involved in congregational decisions about property.<sup>xii</sup>

At the end of January, a meeting to elect Trustees resulted in a church board supportive of the minister's position. On February 9th, the minister's wife wrote in her journal, "It seems the dissatisfied meet in Dr. Workman's lecture room to preach and teach their Sunday School."

In the middle of February, Rev. Hosmer of Buffalo met with members who were disaffected followed by a Trustees meeting. Caroline Dall wrote, “Mr. Hosmer told me, Dr. Workman had complained to him of the mischievous influence of the sewing circle!!” A month later, Caroline Dall saw “the Protests of the Minority - signed by eleven of the least educated ... attendants of our church. The only exception is Dr. Joseph Workman - a somewhat conspicuous person - but a man far from virtuous and an intriguer. The protest objected to Mr. Dall’s ‘indiscretions’ and my ‘interferences.’”

On March 24th, Trustee received a note from Dr. Workman, to transfer the church land as soon as the Trustees met stringent requirements. Feelings of opposition from the previous four months had hardened. On Sunday, April 2, Caroline Dall found that seeing two particular women in their seats “gave me a painful feeling.” The next week, she tried to speak to a “disaffected” woman “but she turned her head entirely away.” Caroline felt compelled to take Sunday School though the guest preacher’s pay could have been interpreted as covering that period. Instead he was off with his friends, insensitive to her needs.

On April 13th, Caroline Dall received “a letter from Dr. Hosmer that went through me like a sword. It repeated all his assessments of Charles’s ‘unfitness for labour,’ and besought me to leave Toronto at once, - all this in the kindest manner.”

By mid-April, she felt convinced by a strange letter from Charles Dall that his service as minister in Toronto should conclude. She copied the latest questionable letter sent to her by her husband and forwarded copies to convince friends including her father, Hosmer and Dix of his true condition. It was time to do her duty and Caroline Dall worked on obtaining a letter from Charles asking for a dismissal from his post. When it finally arrived, she found the resignation letter he had sent seemed inadequate to her, so she composed a new one. Unable to finish reading it aloud, Trustee John Patton had to pass it to Mr. Hincks. John and Caroline copied the revised resignation letter into the church record book, along with a recalculation of Charles monetary contributions to the church, lest Dr. Workman be given ammunition to call his minister a “braggart” or dishonest. Thus, due to a breakdown in Rev. Dall's health, he withdrew from his Toronto post.

Some weeks during the church controversy, Caroline appeared thin. One week, she spent all of Sunday

morning at church in tears. During this period, Caroline Dall felt disappointed that Dorothea Dix was not supportive of her. She kept her equilibrium when Reverends Hosmer and Gannett blamed her for both the church conflict and Charles' ill health since they were influenced by Charles' vehement complaints about her. In an outburst to Caroline's father, Charles denied that the Toronto church no longer wished his services, insisting that they did not want to be ruled by a woman. He refused to believe Caroline Dall's confession that she wrote the Toronto church's fund-raising circular.

A letter from Mrs. Elizabeth Workman is revealing, expressing regret about the timing of Rev. Dall's departure and an opinion of Caroline Dall held by some members of the congregation. On July 25th, she wrote:

...Mr. Dall is in Boston. Mrs. Dall is living here just now. Mr. Patton has had the cholera. I drove past the church the other day. It looks better than I expected. I feel very sorry for Mr. Dall. It is bad to have to leave when the church is nearly finished. Mrs. Dall will never [care] for any but for her own country ladies and ours foolish enough to feel hurt because she thinks they are not worth talking to. She did not know how to play her cards on this side or else she would have gained the Ladies and then she might have kept the Gentlemen.<sup>xlii</sup>

Every year Caroline Dall rambled with friends in an extensive cemetery to enjoy early spring flowers. They discovered mayflowers, lichen, birds returned from winter haunts and delicate butterflies. Wandering away from her usual path through the cemetery in the summer of 1854, Caroline Dall stumbled and found she had "invaded a sanctuary of the dead." She saw hundreds of graves. "They stretched out far beyond me, on every side in parallel rows...There were no stones or other memorials to recall the names of those who lay there, but a slip of a shingle, bearing a number, was thrust into the turf at the head of every grave." In answer to her wondering, a rough-looking

neighbor informed her that they were the graves of those who died of cholera in 1847. As a minister's wife she "stood among what I may fitly call a 'congregation' of graves."

It was only a few hours later that she heard "The cholera is among us." For the next two months, Caroline Dall entered the houses of dear Toronto friends, outcasts and strangers suffering or mowed down by the disease. Describing crowded and neglected urban areas, ironically she noted narrow lanes reeking with stagnant water and filthy odors, over which city fathers scattered only a little superficial lime.

During July and August of 1854, she witnessed cholera sheds bleaching on the garrison plain, the hospital cart backing up to receive pauper patients, and hearses drawn by horses with bedraggled plumes standing in front of undertaker shops "in rows, to be summoned like cabs when they were wanted." While she herself "seemed to lead a sort of charmed life among the dying and the dead," she recalled "how the aristocracy

deserted the city, that they could not save.<sup>xliii</sup>

Both while she lived in Toronto and after she returned to the Boston area, Caroline Dall promoted a greater hearing for the new cause of woman's rights. Her perspective had developed in this area. As a teenage schoolgirl, she vigorously denied that women needed suffrage, as schoolmate Ednah Dow Littlehale Cheney later recalled.<sup>xliv</sup>

At about that age, she encountered medical professionals adverse to women exercising their intelligence.<sup>xlv</sup> Even a decade later in her Essays and Sketches she denies interest in “the movement in regard to the rights of women,” doubting “whether Providence ever intended that women should personally share the duties of the commonwealth. We feel that this is utterly incompatible with the more precious and positive duties of the nursery and the fireside.” Her views changed rapidly, Dall's earliest book indicates the basis for her later career as a woman's rights lecturer:

When a finished education shall be every woman's birthright; when the respect of the other sex shall be her legitimate inheritance; when the woman of any rank will be able to obtain a livelihood for herself or her children without overtaking the generosity of man; when she shall no longer find herself, even for a moment, a tool or a plaything. We would willingly listen to her voice on the religious assembly...<sup>xlvi</sup>

While in Canada, Caroline Dall was a corresponding editor of *Una*, the first feminist newspaper published in North America. A story by her was featured in its first issue. Once more living in the Boston area after her Canadian sojourn, Dall became co-editor of *Una*. C.H.D. (as she sometimes signed herself) reported to her readers that Lucy Stone, a graduate of Oberlin College and woman's rights advocate had appeared in Toronto. Despite a severe storm, over 300 women and men had crowded into St. Lawrence Hall to hear her on March 13, 1855. Her topic was “The Educational and Industrial Disabilities of Woman.” In a letter, a Toronto friend of Dall enthused:

Miss Stone was listened to with breathless attention, and rapturously applauded. I was enchanted with the manner, the quiet grace with which she spoke. The noble words of truth and justice which she uttered, flowed forth in such flute-like tones, that the most bigoted conservative could not dissent for a moment. The next night, Lucy Stone lectured on “The Bible Position of Women.” Dall's Toronto correspondent reported, “I trembled for her and the cause on account of the bigotry of our people. A better, a more satisfactory exposition I never heard. The most Ultra Orthodox could not, I think, object to it.”<sup>fn1</sup> In a later issue, Dall recruited an expert to answer criticism of Stone's biblical analysis. Lucy Stone had already spoken in an “earnest and engaging manner” in Hamilton on “The Right of Women To Vote.” Audience members asked for advice on organizing. Stone said that if a committee formed, drafted resolutions and sought petition signatures to be sent to the legislature, their action would eventually have an effect. The hope to “see a Woman's Rights Association in Toronto” that was then expressed did not happen for over two decades.<sup>xlvii</sup>

Familiarity with Canada, where Dall had lived for three-and-a-half years and in which she had done some traveling, bred appreciation. Partly to satisfy the portion of her readership, to which she had

sold subscriptions while living in Toronto, there was more Canadian content. Caroline Dall urged U.S. visitors to travel beyond the familiar sights of Quebec City and Montreal, to see undeveloped natural beauty. She described winding rivers, impressive falls, wide plains and gentle hills. Prompting reverie, incredible sunsets deserved attention.<sup>xlviii</sup> Having read and visited with Susanna Moodie, whom she cites, Dall advocated a mild and temporary version of “roughing it in the bush.” She saw First Nations peoples and her description contained both positive and negative elements.

Dall gently reprimanded Americans for a grievous unawareness of their neighbor to the north. She noted that friends had assailed her with inquiries “as to how many months in the year I could do without a fire.” She was incredulous that the major Canadian city of Kingston was not depicted on a map examined by friends.

She also reported being questioned about “whether there were any schools in our town.” Defending Toronto, Dall responded heatedly, “our *town*, when we had two universities, one college and a chancellor's robe, exactly like Prince Albert's, which cost, if I remember right, four hundred pounds sterling.<sup>xlix</sup> Concerned about the scale of U.S. obliviousness, Caroline Dall noticed diplomatically, “an American Atlas did the same injustice to this noble country [of Canada], that a European Atlas always does to the United States.”

With two young children of four and nine, Caroline Dall eventually moved her family back to the United States by the fall of 1854. A year after leaving Toronto, the Rev. Charles Dall left for Calcutta to serve as a Unitarian missionary without his family. He saw them only four more times during his lifetime.

After departing from Toronto, Carolyn Dall moved to Boston and made her living as a lecturer and taking in boarders. She helped organize women's rights conferences in 1855 and 1859, and delivered major speeches at them. For years, Carolyn Dall served as Christian Education Director at

Rev. James Freeman Clarke's Church of the Disciples in Boston. Carolyn Dall became well-known as the author of many books. *The College, The Market, and the Court: or, Woman's Relation to Education, Labor and Law*, a collection of her lectures, was published in 1867. She wrote on a variety of subjects, such as biography, history, health and religion. Her most important book over time is *Margaret and Her Friends* (1895), an account of Margaret Fuller's "Conversations" based on Dall's 1841 notes. It was a revisionist view of transcendentalism, pointing out the New England origins of the philosophy and featuring the role of women in its development.

Caroline Dall spoke from many pulpits, often the first woman to do so and maintained she was the first to preach in Boston. After she apparently was the first woman to occupy the pulpit in Toronto, some men may have preached when requested by her to prevent the unseemly spectacle of her taking the pulpit again. Despite Dall's lectures and writings on behalf of women, however, she was never in the forefront of the woman's rights movement. She seems to have had a "forceful" personality that made it difficult for others to work with her. Nonetheless in 1865, she was one of the founders of an organization devoted to helping the poor, the imprisoned, and the mentally ill - the American Social Science Association.

Dall's son William became curator of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. in 1869. A decade later, Caroline Dall moved there to live with him, continuing to teach and write. She became a close friend of first lady Lucy Hayes. When her husband died in Calcutta in 1886, she assured that his missionary contribution was recognized. She died of pneumonia in the capital of her nation in 1912 at the age of 90. In her early essay "Personal Influence," Caroline Dall reflected, "A word, a look, a tone of music has sometimes wrought a change in character, which makes us tremble at the vast amount of our responsibility."

## SOURCES

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J.M.S. Careless, *The Union of the Canadas*, pp. 132-4. Caroline Dall noted, "During several months of the year, we seem who related. Every railroad will bind us afresh to the world abroad." in her "Letter From Canada," *The Monthly Religious Magazine (MRM)*, September 1853.

C.W.H.D., Letter From Canada, *The Monthly Religious Magazine(MRM)*, September 1853. Dated Toronto, 1852.

Caroline Dall, *Alongside*, Boston, 1900, pp. 55-60

Caroline Dall, *Margaret and Her Friends*, Boston, 1856, p. 9. Many of the thirty people who usually attended are briefly filed on pp. 17-22.

This was the first and only time that Fuller's "Conversations" included men, since they dominated the direction of the conversation and women fell into an accustomed silence in their presence.

Joel Myerson, "Caroline Dall's Reminiscences of Margaret Fuller," *Harvard Library Bulletin* 1974:419, 422. Helen R. Deese, "Liberal Education': Caroline Healey Dall and Emerson," *Emersonian Circles*, Wesley T. Mott and Robert E. Burkholder, eds. University of Rochester Press, 1997, pp. 241-2.

Clara Thomas, *Ryerson of Upper Canada*, Ryerson Press, Toronto, 1969

Caroline Dall Journal, Massachusetts Historical Society (MHS), May 18, 1854.

Howard M. Wach, "A Boston Feminist in the Victorian Public Sphere: The Social Criticism of Caroline Healey Dall," *THE NEW ENGLAND QUARTERLY*, 68 (1995), 430-432.

Sunday School Class [Attendance] Books, West Church 1839-1840, The Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America, Radcliffe College

Mary Lu MacDonald, "The Foster Sisters," *Concise Portraits of Canadian Unitarian and Universalist Women*, Irene Baros-Johnson and Mary Lu MacDonald, editors, Halifax, Nova Scotia, May 2006, pp.1-2. In the February and March 1852 issues of *The Snow Drop: A Juvenile Magazine*, Caroline W.H. Dall also wrote "How To Make Children Happy," about a young woman starting a community flower garden for poor children and teaching them "habits of industry, order and thrift."

Caroline Dall journal entries, Massachusetts Historical Society (MHS). Helen R. Deese, "'My Life Reads to Me Like A Romance': The Journals of Caroline Healey Dall," *The Massachusetts Historical Review*, vol. 3, 2001, p. 20. Caroline Dall's father was known to be a Union man and therefore not an abolitionist, but he supported the ministry of the Rev. Theodore Parker. The minister became head of the Boston vigilance committee after the Act was passed in 1850. Right before she moved to live in Canada, Dall was proud that her parents had supported fugitive slave Ellen Craft's seamstress work. Additionally, s

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reports that Mr. Healey had hidden Ellen Craft in his home before she fled Macon, Georgia slavecatchers before a difficult trip to Halifax, Nova Scotia to reach England with her husband William on the Cunarder *Cambria* in fall 1850. *Alongside*, p. 93 and p. 100. John Weis, *Life and Correspondence of Theodore Parker*, v. I, 1864. William R. Hutchison, *The Transcendental Ministers*, (Boston:Beacon Press), 1959. William Craft, *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom; or, The Escape of William and Ellen Craft from Slavery [1860]*, in Arna Bontemps, editor, *Great Slave Narratives* (Boston: Beacon Press), 1969.

----- Caroline Dall to Mark Healey, Letter, The Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America, Radcliffe College

----- Caroline Dall Journal, November 1851, MHA

----- Letter from Sam May, Jr., January 24, 1852, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston. Robin W. Winks, "A Sacred Animosity": Abolitionism in Canada," *The Antislavery Vanguard*, Martin Duberman, ed., 1965, p. 323. Later she thought that *Liberator* newspaper publisher William Lloyd Garrison contacted her, Siebert Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University, August 25, 1889.

----- Caroline Dall Journal, December 11, 1853, MHS

----- Helen R. Deese, "Tending the 'Sacred Fires': Theodore Parker and Caroline Healey Dall," *Proceedings of the Unitarian Universalist Historical Society*, 23, 1995, pp. 23-4

----- Barbara Welter, "The Merchant's Daughter: A Tale From Life," *The New England Quarterly*, March 1969: 6.

----- Dean Grodzins, *American Heretic: Theodore Parker and Transcendentalism*, (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press), 2002, pp. 268-270. Parker sermons were read to the Toronto congregation by substitute ministers on March 6 and March 20, 1853.

----- Welter, 8

----- C.W.H.D., "Letter to the Editor," *MRM*, February 1852.

----- "Unitarian Society in Toronto, C.W.," *Christian Inquirer (CI)*, May 8, 1852. Unsigned article seems written by Caroline Dall.

----- Caroline Dall Journal, January 2 and February 20, 1853, MHA

----- Journal, *MHS*, March 20, 1852.

----- Helen R. Deese, *Selected Journals of Caroline Healey Dall*, (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society), , 2006, Volume I: 1838-1855, notes that several pages of the journal were excised by Dall, presumably because of passionate content about this relationship.

----- Caroline Dall Journal, May 1, 1852, MHA

----- C.W.H.D., *MRM*, September 1852.

----- C.W.H.D. *MRM*, September 1852.

----- C.W.H.D., "The Country Parish," *MRM*, May 1853.

----- Ibid.

----- Olivia Dabney to Caroline Dall, Letter, December 20, 1852, The Schlesinger Library On the History of Women in America, Radcliffe College

----- "Unitarian Society in Toronto, C.W." *CI*, May 8, 1852; in Phillip Hewett, *Unitarians in Canada*, Canadian Unitarian Council, Toronto, 1995, p. 70.

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- ..... Florence Steiner, *One Hundred Years of Service 1845-1945*, First Unitarian Church, Toronto, pp.10,13, 15.
  - ..... Albert Horton, *History of the First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto 1845-1901*, Toronto, 1985[1901], pp. 14-23
  - ..... *Alongside*, pp. 7-8
  - ..... C.W.H.D., Letter..., *MRM*, September 1853
  - ..... C.W.H.D., *MRM*, September 1853
    - ..... C.W.H.D., "Letter to the Editor," *MRM*, February 1852. It is dated as written December 26, 1851.
    - ..... Caloline Dall Journal, April 22, 1853 and February 27, 1854, *MHA*
    - ..... C.W.H.D., "Letter...", *MRM*, Feb. 1852.
    - ..... Christine I.M. Johnston, *The Father of Canadian Psychiatry: Joseph Workman*, (Victoria, British Columbia: Ogden Press), 2000, pp. 155-157.
    - ..... Johnston, p. 160.
  - ..... Caroline Dall, "A Journey Through Canada to the Sault Sainte Marie," *The Una*, May 1855.
  - ..... Margaret McFadden, "Boston Teenagers Debate the Woman's Question, 1837-8," *Signs*, 1990, vol. 15, no. 4, pp. 836, 838, 845
  - ..... Wach, 434.
  - ..... Caroline Dall, *Essays and Sketches*, 1849, pp. 83-84.
  - ..... *Una*, May, 1855, 75-76; June 1855, 77-78. In 1876, the Toronto Women's Literary and Science Club, a covert feminist organization was founded in Toronto by Dr. Emily Stowe; in 1883, Stowe founded the Canadian Woman Suffrage Association.
    - ..... C.W.H.D., "Impromptu: Poem written in cars between Barrie, on Kempenfeldt Bay, Lake Simpcoc," Toronto. October 20, 1853, *MRM*, July 1854
    - ..... Journey, May 1855, pp. 75-76