

Susan B. Anthony Relatives Traveling to Birthplace

By David L. Shaw, Finger Lakes Times

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Three local women taking a bus trip Thursday to the Massachusetts birthplace of famous women's rights leader Susan B. Anthony will have something special in common.

They all are related to Anthony.

The three with the family connection — Doris Wolf of Junius, Helen Kirker of Stanley and Leona Lauster of Lyons — will visit the house in Adams, Mass., where Anthony was born in 1820 and lived for the first six years of her life.

"I'm excited to see the house, which I hear almost got sold and renovated instead of preserved," Wolf said. "It will be nice to meet the other two women who are related."

Wolf said her genealogical research has revealed that Anthony's grandmother is her seventh great-grandmother on her mother's side.

Lauster said she is Anthony's fourth cousin, four times removed. Kirker is Anthony's second cousin, six times removed.

"I knew I was related to her," Kirker said. "My family told me I was related. I just wasn't sure how until I hired a researcher who is working with me at the 1816 Farmington Quaker Meeting House Museum.

"Susan B. Anthony was herself a Quaker, and Quakers were at the forefront of many social reform movements of the 1800s. They were big believers in equality."

Kirker noted that the Farmington meeting house hosted talks by Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass and Lucretia Mott.

"I'm thrilled to know my relation to such a famous person. It's an honor. I look forward to meeting the other two on the trip," said Kirker, who will be making her first trip to the birthplace.

"I admire the perseverance these women showed, knowing they would never themselves enjoy the right to vote they were fighting for," she said.

Kirker volunteers at the Women's Rights National Historical Park in Seneca Falls and has met Wolf. She's not met Lauster.

Wolf grew up in Lanesborough, Mass. Her mother told her about 1999 of their relationship to Anthony. Anthony's grandmother was Susannah Richardson, also Wolf's seventh great-grandmother.

"I have her nose," Wolf said. "And I think I inherited her willingness to speak up about things I feel strongly about. It also explains why my mother was always so adamant about voting.

"It's genetic," she noted.

Lauster said she "suspected" a relationship to Anthony from viewing her family tree.

“I wanted to get proof of the exact relationship. My mother did research on the [ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) website about 10 years ago to get the exact relationship,” Lauster said.

She also is looking forward to Thursday’s bus trip. It will be her first visit to the Anthony birthplace, although she’s visited the Anthony home in Rochester.

“I look forward to meeting the other two women. It should be fun,” she said.

The day trip was arranged by Kathy Peters and Colleen Spellecy of Waterloo, members of the Susan B. Anthony Birthplace Board of Directors.

The bus leaves Seneca Falls at 7 a.m. and returns at 9 p.m. The \$100 cost includes the bus, breakfast, lunch and a boxed supper, visits to the birthplace, the 1781 Quaker Meeting House and St. Stanislaus Church.