

## Susan B. Anthony Museum Open and Enjoying Visitors

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*By: Ryan Hutton, North Adams Transcript*

ADAMS -- The Susan B. Anthony Birthplace and Museum opened its doors officially for the first time three weeks ago, ready to give the public a glimpse into the life of Adams' most famous daughter.

The 192-year old East Road home has seen a steady flow of visitors in the past couple weeks, according to Sean Carollo, interim director of the birthplace. He said people have responded very positively to the museum and have shown a great fascination with the early years of the nation's most recognizable women's suffragist.

"This is a big part of the area's heritage," he said. "A lot of people think of it as a small area, but there is a wealth of history here. Susan B. Anthony is as much a part of the heritage and history of the area as the Hoosac Tunnel or Herman Melville, and she's part of the nation's history. It's good to take time to claim one of our own."

Carollo said it is the house itself and the family life it represented that grabs people's attention.

"You say that this household was 16 people, and people stop and realize how big that was," he said. "Then we explain it wasn't just immediate family: There were five children but also the mill workers. When you hired workers, you provided housing for them and took them as part of the family. The Mill Houses in town are a reminder of that. We've sort of lost that connection between employer and employee."

Carol Crossed, director of the birthplace and the one who purchased the then-dilapidated home in 2006, said she was excited to have her labor of love finally open to the public. "It's been wonderful to be able to honor Susan B. Anthony in this way, especially in this year," she said.

Aug. 26 will mark the 90th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment which guaranteed women in the United States the right to vote -- a milestone that Susan B. Anthony never lived to see.

Crossed said the museum has a celebration planned for the event including a musical performance by a Battenville, N.Y. group -- the community where Anthony lived after Adams. The group received a grant to write an original song about Anthony. The event will also unveil a special project the birthplace has commissioned from Synthespian Studios, a computer graphics company. Synthespian has age regressed the popular images of Anthony to see what she would have looked like as a six-year-old girl -- her age when she left Adams.

In conjunction with the age regressed photo, the birthplace is sponsoring a contest for all school-age children in town to draw what they think Anthony would have looked like at age 6. Entries will be accepted until July 10 and will be displayed at the Art on the Green event on July 24 which takes place on the Town Hall lawn. The winners of the contest will have their drawings hung in the museum.

Crossed said the museum has also managed to raise \$625,000 for its endowment, which it plans to use on programming and acquisitions for the museum. She said they recently managed to procure a pin fellow suffragist Alice Paul gave to those that were imprisoned with her after they were all released. Paul was arrested on a charge of "obstructing traffic" in 1917 while picketing the White House. While Anthony died in 1906, Crossed said the pin still represents the movement Anthony helped found.

"It's a little jail with a cell door," Crossed said. "We sell reproductions in our gift shop, but his is one of the actual, original 63 given to all the women in jail with her in 1917. I believe there were 103 total made, but it's still a wonderful addition to the museum." As visitors continue to stream into the historic home, Carollo said he thinks people are attracted to the museum because Anthony was a very positive figure.

"It's a very American story: The idea of someone from a small town becoming involved in the larger political scene and having a real impact that made a difference in the lives of millions."

To reach Ryan Hutton,  
e-mail [rhutton@thetranscript.com](mailto:rhutton@thetranscript.com).