

HESTER C. JEFFREY

LIFESPAN CELEBRATES BLACK HISTORY MONTH

WHO WAS HESTER C. JEFFREY?

Hester C. Whitehurst Jeffrey, also known as Hester Jeffreys or Hester Jeffries, was an African American community organizer, activist, suffragist, and musician. Her parents were Robert and Martha Whitehurst, two free black adults. It is believed Jeffrey was born in Norfolk, VA, but lived in Boston with her siblings and uncle for many years.

In 1865, she married R. Jerome Jeffrey whose father, Reverend Roswell Jeffrey, was a political activist in Rochester, NY. She later moved to Rochester and became very involved in community activism.



Born: Date Unknown, 1842

Died: January 2nd, 1934

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Active member of the Political Equality Club
- Active member and later County Superintendent of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU)
- National organizer of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs (NACWC)
- New York State President of the Federation of Colored Women's Clubs
- Section President of the Needlework Guild of America
- Member of the Douglass Monument Committee
- She also created clubs for African American women:
 - Susan B. Anthony Club for Black Women
 - The Climbers
 - The Hester C. Jeffrey Club for Young Black Women
 - This club raised money for young black women to take classes at what later became RIT.

SOURCES AND FURTHER READING:

- https://web.archive.org/web/20160706181530/http://rochesterunitarian.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Hester_Jeffrey.pdf
- <https://rlc.org/winningthevote/biographies/hester-jeffrey/>
- https://www.libraryweb.org/~digitized/books/History_Douglass_Monument.pdf
- <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/jeffrey-hester-c-1842-1934/>

WHAT WAS SHE LIKE?

As you can see from the list of her accomplishments, Jeffreys was a hard-working mover and shaker. She was a woman of many talents and described as an "accomplished musician." She was chosen to direct the music at the 1897 unveiling ceremony of the the Frederick Douglass statue in Rochester. Jeffrey was also seen as someone who "bridged the gulf between black and white communities" by serving on both black and white organizations and building coalition with a variety of different community groups. She was chosen to give a eulogy at Susan B. Anthony's funeral in 1906. Family was very important to her and in the later years moved back to Boston to be closer to relatives. She lived to be 91.