

UNSUNG HEROINES 2023

St. Ann & the Holy Trinity Church and Pro-Cathedral



**Julia Ward Howe (1819-1910), Writer,
Lecturer, Abolitionist, Suffragist**

Growing up, my Grammie Donnet and I shared a favorite hymn, *The Battle Hymn of the Republic*. I remember standing shoulder-to-shoulder with her in the pews of her little church in Vermont, proudly singing out our “Glory, glory Hallelujah’s” together, and truly believing that, indeed, His truth was marching on. Today, I can appreciate that not enough people know the truth of the woman behind those rousing words: Julia Ward Howe, who lived from 1819-1910.

Writer, lecturer, abolitionist and suffragist, Howe developed an early love of poetry and writing, and was anonymously published in literary magazines by age 20. During the Civil War, Howe worked for the U.S. Sanitary Commission, which promoted clean and hygienic conditions for soldiers and hospitals. After coming to Washington D.C. with her minister to visit Union troops, she was inspired to write *Battle Hymn*, first published as a poem in an 1862 edition of *Atlantic Monthly*. After the war, Howe went on to champion the vote for women, joining with Lucy Stone to found the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA), notable for its vocal support of the 15th Amendment, which promised voting rights for Black men. Howe also helped establish the AWSA’s

newspaper, the *Woman's Journal*, which she edited for 20 years. The 1870s saw Howe preside over the Women's International Peace Association in 1871, and organize the Association for the Advancement of Women, dedicated to improving women's education and professional advancement, in 1873.

It is little surprise that the poet who wrote, "As He died to make men holy, let us live to make men free," lived a life dedicated to achieving equity across racial and gender lines. Let us sing her praises with the same exultant spirit in which we sing her words!

Submitted by Mary Johnson