

## Notable American Women

- Anne Hutchinson** (1591-1643). Early champion of religious liberty and free speech, this midwife was put on trial in 1637 for her outspoken views. The Massachusetts General Court found her guilty of sedition and banished her from the Colony.
- Mercy Otis Warren** (1728-1814). Born in Barnstable, Massachusetts, Mercy Otis Warren is sometimes called the “conscience of the American Revolution.” The wife and sister of patriot leaders (James Warren and James Otis, respectively), she wrote several pro-American plays after 1772 and eventually, in 1805, published a three-volume History of the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the American Revolution.
- Phyllis Wheatley** (1753-1784). One of the best-known poets of the Revolutionary period, Wheatley was born on the western coast of Africa and kidnapped when she was about seven years old. She was transported to Boston, where she was purchased in 1761 by John Wheatley, a prominent tailor, as an attendant to his wife. Wheatley learned English and was taught to read and write, and within sixteen months of her arrival in America she was reading passages from the Bible, Greek and Latin classics, astronomy, geography, history, and British literature. In 1773 thirty-nine of Wheatley’s poems were published in London as *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*. This collection, Wheatley's only book, is the first volume of poetry to be published by an Afro-American.
- Hannah Adams** (1755-1831). Historian and the first professional woman writer in the United States, she published *A Summary History of New England* in 1799.
- Deborah Sampson Gannett** (1760-1827). Signing up for the 4th Massachusetts Regiment under an assumed male name, she became the first woman to enlist as a soldier in the American army. After being wounded nineteen months later, she received an honorable medical discharge and, later, a military pension.
- Emma Willard** (1787 -1870). Foremost 19th century proponent of higher education for women. She founded the Troy (NY) Female Academy, an all-girls' school, where she daringly taught her students science and math and educated hundreds of future teachers. Her efforts on behalf of equal educational opportunities for women helped lead to coeducational school systems.
- Sacajawea** (c. 1789-c. 1812). A Shoshone Indian, she was captured by an enemy tribe who eventually sold her to the French Canadian trapper she later married. In 1804, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark hired her to help lead them as they explored the western United States, Bringing along her newborn son, she acted as interpreter and guide and was later credited by the men with the success of their expedition.
- Sarah Moore Grimke** (1792-1873) and **Angelina Emily Grimke** (1805-1879). Sisters from a wealthy slave-owning family in South Carolina they were the only white southerners to be leaders in the American Anti-Slavery Society. In an 1838 abolitionist speech before the Massachusetts State Legislature, Angelina became the first American woman to address a legislative body. Their work inspired leading women's rights figures.
- Lucretia Mott** (1793-1880). Ordained Quaker minister and pioneering activist in the women's suffrage movement who addressed the first women's rights convention at Seneca Falls (NY). She was also an outspoken abolitionist whose staunch beliefs caused her to boycott all goods produced by slave labor.
- Sojourner Truth** (c. 1797-1883). A former slave, she became a leading proponent of human rights and a spokesperson for abolition and women's rights. Her question "and ain't I a woman?" posed

during a speech before a women's rights convention sought to align the plights of poor and black women with those of white suffragists.

**Dorothea Dix** (1802-1887). Crusader of rights for the mentally ill in North America and Europe, she founded or improved over thirty hospitals for the mentally ill and influenced government legislation with her research. In 1861, she was appointed first Superintendent of U.S. Army Nurses.

**Margaret Fuller** (1810-1850). Leading female intellectual of her day and author of the pioneering feminist work *Women in the Nineteenth Century* (1845). She edited Ralph Waldo Emerson's paper *The Dial* and, while writing literary and social criticism in Europe for the *New York Tribune*, became America's first female correspondent.

**Harriet Beecher Stowe** (1811-1896). Author of short stories, poetry and the biggest best-seller of the nineteenth century, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The novel, which first appeared in serialized version in *National Era* magazine, was the first major American work in which a black man appeared as the central hero. The book had a remarkable impact on pre-Civil War society, stirring the nation's opposing passions regarding slavery and hastening the conflict. When President Abraham Lincoln later met Stowe, he addressed her as "the little woman who made this great war."

**Harriet Tubman** (1815-1913). As a "conductor" on the Underground Railroad, this fugitive slave helped thousands of blacks escape north prior to the Civil War. During the War, she served as a Union nurse and military spy.

**Elizabeth Cady Stanton** (1815-1902). Known, along with Susan B. Anthony, as one of the foremost figures of the movement for women's equality. Her outrage at being excluded from an anti-slavery convention because of her gender inspired her to co-organize the 1848 Seneca Falls (NY) Women's Rights Convention. There, she drafted her famous Declaration of Sentiments, modeled on Declaration of Independence. Her accomplishments included co-founding the newspaper *Revolution*, heading the National Woman Suffrage Association for twenty years and being first president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association.

**Amelia Bloomer** (1818-1894). Social reformer, suffragist, and publisher of the temperance paper *The Lily*, she was ridiculed by nineteenth century men for the liberated "pants" outfits she popularized.

**Maria Mitchell** (1818-1889). The first American woman astronomer and the director of the observatory at Vassar College, she was the first female member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

**Lucy Stone** (1818-1893)-Pioneering leader in the women suffrage movement and founder of the American Woman Suffrage Association. Her 1855 marriage ceremony to Henry Blackwell exemplified her commitment to her cause: the standard promise of obedience was eliminated and, drawing inspiration from the example she and her husband set, the word *stoner* became a common 19th century word for women who kept their maiden names after marriage.

**Julia Ward Howe** (1819-1911). Abolitionist, suffragist, and social reformer, she was also a poet whose most famous work became the anthem, *The Battle Hymn of the Republic*.

**Susan Brownell Anthony** (1820-1906). Leader in the American Anti-Slavery Society, she later turned her life's devotion to women's suffrage and, with Elizabeth Cady Stanton, founded the National Woman Suffrage Association and the newspaper *Revolution*. She was so widely considered a symbol of the women's suffrage movement that the 19th Amendment finally giving women the right to vote was commonly referred to as the Anthony Amendment and her likeness was later etched on an American silver dollar.

- Mary Baker Eddy** (1821-1910). Founder of Christian Science, the international religious movement which advocates spiritual healing in the belief that the body is governed not by physical cause and effect but by the powers of the mind and spirit. In 1879, she organized the First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston, and in 1908, established the internationally known newspaper, *The Christian Science Monitor*
- Elizabeth Blackwell** (1821-1910). The first American woman to receive a medical doctor degree (1849), she opened the New York Infirmary *for Women and Children* and co-founded the Women's Medical College in 1868.
- Clara Barton** (1824-1912). Called the "Angel of the Battlefield" for her first aid heroism during the Civil War, she was instrumental in founding the American Red Cross.
- Antoinette Louisa Brown** (1825-1921). Social reformer, abolitionist and suffragist, she was the nation's first ordained female minister, one of the first American women to attend college, and an author of books on evolution and social theory.
- Mary Harris "Mother" Jones** (1830-1930). Labor organizer who championed the cause of social justice and devoted herself to the struggle against the poor hours, pay and working conditions of railroad, textile and mine workers.
- Helen Hunt Jackson** (1830-1885). The most prominent female historian of the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century. After attending a 1879 lecture by Chief Standing Bear where he described the ill-treatment of the Ponca Indians in Nebraska, Jackson began studying American Indian/U. S. Government relations, eventually publishing *A Century of Dishonor*, calling for change from the base, selfish policy to a treatment characterized by humanity and justice. Later, she published the best-selling novel *Ramona*.
- Emily Dickinson** (1839-1886). Reclusive poet of hundreds of inventive, original poems, she was the most famous woman poet in nineteenth-century America.
- Frances Elizabeth Caroline Willard** (1839-98), American educator and reformer, born in Churchville, New York, and educated at Northwestern Female College. In 1874 she gave up a successful teaching career to become secretary of the National Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). An indefatigable crusader on behalf of prohibition, she was elected president of the WCTU in 1879, founded the World's Woman's Christian Temperance Union in 1883, and was elected president of the latter organization in 1891. Willard was identified also with the movement for woman suffrage and the Prohibition party, which she helped to organize in 1882. She became president of the National Council of Women in 1890. Her writings include *Woman and Temperance* (1883) and *Glimpses of Fifty Years* (1889).
- Mary Cassatt** (1844-1926). World-renown artist, she introduced Impressionism to America and is famous especially for her paintings and prints depicting mothers and children.
- Carry Nation** (1846-1930). Prohibitionist reformer, she gained fame for wielding a hatchet while destroying saloons.
- Carrie Chapman Catt** (1859-1947). Editor of the *National Suffrage Bulletin* and a leader in the women's suffrage movement, she was instrumental in achieving voting rights *for women* in America's West and was president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association at the time the 19th Amendment was finally passed. She also served as president of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance and founded the National League of Women Voters to help teach women how to intelligently use their vote. Her 1890 marriage included a prenuptial agreement giving her *four* months in each year to travel for the cause of women's equality.

- Martha Thomas Carey** (1857-1935). Suffragist and educator long associated with Bryn Mawr College, she was the first female college faculty member in the country to hold the title "dean," started the first graduate program at any women's school, and established the country's first graduate ,scholarships. She was also a founder of the Association to Promote Scientific Research by Women and of the International Federation of University Women.
- Florence Kelley** (1859–1932). American social worker and reformer, graduate of Cornell, 1882, and Northwestern University Law School in 1894. Married in 1884 to a Polish doctor, Lazare Wishniewski, she divorced him six years later and became a Hull House resident. A confirmed socialist and active in many reforms, Kelley devoted most of her energies toward securing protective labor legislation, especially for women and children. From 1899 she served for many years as director of the National Consumer's League, which strove for industrial reform through consumer activity.
- Annie Oakley** (Phoebe Anne Oakley Mozee) (1860-1926). Known as "Lady Sure Shot," this markswoman made a living demonstrating her amazing ability to hit her target. As star of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, she traveled the world, dazzling audiences with such feats as shooting the flames off a revolving wheel of candles, splitting a playing card held edge-on and, while on tour in Berlin, knocking the ash off a cigarette held between the lips of Germany's Crown Prince William.
- Charlotte Perkins Gilman** (1860-1935). Writer and lecturer on women's role in society, she was a leading feminist theorist and instrument of change.
- Jane Addams** (1860-1935). Co-founder of the famous Chicago settlement house "Hull House," she was a pacifist, a suffragist, an advocate of social reform and, in 1931, the first American woman to win the Nobel ... Peace Prize. She turned her prize winnings over to the Woman's International League for Peace and Freedom, of which she was president.
- Ida B. Wells** (1862-1931). Black journalist and militant civil rights leader, she was a co-founder of the NAACP and the first president of the Negro Fellowship League.
- Lillian D. Wald** (1867-1940). American nurse and social worker, born in Cincinnati, Ohio, and trained as a nurse at New York Hospital in New York City. In 1893 she founded the Henry Street Settlement for social work, which she later expanded to include a public-health nursing center. She took a leading part in promoting the establishment of the U.S. Children's Bureau in 1912. Wald was the author of *The House on Henry Street* (1915).
- Anna Howard Shaw** (1847-1919). Born in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, England, her family emigrated to the United States in 1851 and settled on the Michigan frontier. At the age of fifteen Anna became a school teacher. A convert to woman's suffrage, Anna became America's first Methodist woman minister in 1880. An outstanding open-air preacher, Anna spoke on various issues including prohibition and women's rights. In 1886 she graduated from Boston University as a doctor, but decided to work instead for the cause of woman's suffrage. Anna was a member of the Women's Christian Temperance Union and was president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association (1904-1915). She was head of the Women's Council of National Defense during the First World War.
- Sarah Breedlove "Madame C. J." Walker** (1867-1919). A southern sharecropper's daughter, she became the first female black millionaire by successfully selling hair preparations for black woman. She also founded several factories and beauty colleges and actively supported many charitable and educational institutions.

- Emma Goldman** (1869-1940). Outspoken feminist, pacifist and lifelong anarchist, this lecturer and author founded *Mother Earth* newspaper and was noted for her radicalism in aiding the world's oppressed.
- Mary McLeod Bethune** (1875-1955). Writer and educator, and daughter of former slaves, she was a champion of humanitarian causes and an advocate of civil rights and education for Blacks. Among her accomplishments were establishing Florida's Bethune-Cookman College and serving as Director of the Division of Negro Affairs in the National Youth Administration during Franklin D. Roosevelt's presidency, at that the highest position ever held in government by a black woman.
- Isadora Duncan** (1878-1927). Pioneer of modern dance in America and Europe, she elevated dance to an art form practiced by serious artists and gained huge popularity for her innovative, expressive style.
- Margaret Sanger** (1879-1966). Pioneering crusader for the legalization of birth control, this social reformer battled the nation's government and courts to open America's first birth control clinic. Founder of the Natural Birth Control League and Planned Parenthood of America, she later took her campaign to provide safe contraception worldwide and formed the International Planned Parenthood Federation.
- Helen Keller** (1880-1968). Triumphant over an early childhood illness which left her blind and deaf, she went on to graduate with honors from Radcliffe College and become a world-famous lecturer, author, and advocate of rights for people with disabilities.
- Frances Perkins** (1880-1965). Social and political reformer, she became the first woman appointed to the New York State Industrial Commission and the first woman member of a United States Cabinet, heading the Department of Labor.
- Jeanette Rankin** (1880-1973). This suffragist became the first female elected to the House of Representatives. A Republican from Montana, she campaigned on a platform of peace and voted against the United States' entry into World War I.
- Eleanor Roosevelt** (1884-1962). Political and social reformer, humanitarian, and outspoken crusader, this First Lady championed causes of social justice worldwide and as a United Nations delegate, chaired the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.
- Alice Paul** (1885-1977). Activist and suffragist who organized the 1913 women's rights march through Washington, D.C. and founded the Congressional Union for Women's Suffrage, a militant branch of the National American Woman Suffrage Association.
- Georgia O'Keeffe** (1887-1986). Known as the greatest American woman artist of the 20th century, her iconoclastic paintings are noted for their lyrical use of abstract color and shape in depicting flowers, nature and the American landscape.
- Marian Anderson** (1897-1993). The first black to become a member of the Metropolitan Opera Company, this internationally renowned opera singer pushed aside racial discrimination and obstacles to achieve world-wide fame. In 1939, she made history when her scheduled concert at Washington D.C.'s Constitution Hall was blocked by the hall's owners, the Daughters of the American Revolution. In response, Eleanor Roosevelt publicly resigned from that organization and a public concert at the Lincoln Memorial was arranged instead. Its attendance by a mixed crowd of 75,000 people, including numerous dignitaries, became a national symbol of social justice and hope.

**Martha Graham** (1894-1991). Founder and longtime principal dancer of the Martha Graham Dance Company and School of Contemporary Dance, this most influential twentieth century choreographer revolutionized the medium through her use of American themes and original scores. Her innovative choreography, expressing raw emotion and inner tension, often incorporated Asian dance, Greek myth and Zen philosophy.

**Amelia Earhart** (1898-1937). Pioneering female aviator and the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean, she achieved many aviation firsts and set numerous transcontinental records before disappearing in the South Pacific while attempting to fly around the world.

**Zora Neale Hurston** (1901-1960). Novelist, essayist and playwright associated with the Harlem Renaissance movement, she also gained fame as an anthropologist of black culture and was the first black to compile a book of African American folklore.

**Margaret Mead** (1901-1978). This internationally known social scientist, environmentalist, and spokesperson for social and intellectual issues introduced the world to anthropology through her 1928 bestseller *Coming of Age in Samoa*, based on her study of cultures in the South Pacific. Her pioneering research and new techniques of fieldwork revolutionized the field of anthropology. Her many accomplishments included serving as President of the American Academy for the Advancement of Science and Curator of Ethnology at the American Museum of Natural History and authoring countless books and articles on society and culture.

**Margaret Bourke-White** (1904-1971). Pioneering photojournalist, she gained fame for her photographs of mill workers and sharecroppers and was famous for her association with *Life* magazine.

**Rachel Carson** (1907-1964). Biologist and author of numerous books about the sea. Her pioneering book, *Silent Spring*, which alerted the country to the environmental dangers of pesticides, had an immediate impact on governmental regulations and is widely considered to have started the modern environmental protection movement.

**Rosa Parks** (b. 1913). By refusing to give up her seat on a city bus to a white man in 1955 Montgomery, Alabama because she "was just plain tired," this hard-working seamstress set off a thirteen-month bus boycott and a long chain of civil rights protests. The result: national attention for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., a Supreme Court ruling outlawing segregation on buses and the title "Mother of the Civil Rights Movement" for Parks, who went on to continue her fight against racial injustice.

**Mildred "Babe" Didrikson** (1914-1956). This remarkable and prodigious athlete, a six-time winner of the Associated Press "Woman Athlete of the Year" award, competed in baseball, basketball, golf and billiards on a national level and was a medal-winning track star, swimmer and skater. Among her many achievements were winning every available golf title in the 1940's, thrice winning the U.S. Women's (Golf) Open, founding the Ladies Professional Golf Association and winning three gold medals in track events at the 1932 Olympics.

**Betty Friedan** (b.1921). Founder of the National Organization of Women, her 1963 best-selling book, *The Feminine Mystique*, changed women's lives worldwide and is credited with inspiring the start of the modern women's liberation movement.

**Shirley Chisholm** (b. 1924). The first black woman elected to Congress, she fought hard for the country's disadvantaged, championing such causes as child welfare, job training, health care, and education.

**Maya Angelou** (b. 1928). Pulitzer Prize-winning author, poet and playwright. In January 1993, she became the first black to compose a poem for a presidential inauguration, which she delivered as *On the Pulse of Morning* at Bill Clinton's swearing-in.

**Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis** (1929-1994). A cultural icon to millions of Americans, she restored the White House and elevated America's image here and abroad during her years as First Lady to President John F. Kennedy. After his assassination, her own courage helped support the country in its grief. In her later life, she was admired as a mother, historic preservationist, and book editor.

**Sandra Day O'Connor** (b. 1930). This Arizona lawmaker-turned-judge and the first woman to hold the office of majority leader in a state senate, made history in 1981 through Ronald Reagan's appointment and Ethnic, Social and Religious Groups, subsequent Senate confirmation as Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, the first woman to sit on this body in its 191-year history.

**Huerta, Dolores** (b. 1930). Co-founder of the United Farm Workers in 1962, Dolores Huerta remains one of the century's most powerful and respected labor leaders. Among Ms. Huerta's contributions are her leadership in the fight to provide thousands of migrant/immigrant children social services and the struggle to achieve unemployment insurance, collective bargaining rights, and immigration rights for farm workers.

**Toni Morrison** (b.1931). Author of *The Song of Solomon*, *Beloved*, and *Tar Baby*, among others, this African American writer, the second American woman to receive the Nobel Prize for literature, gained fame for her powerful writing on black American issues.

**Gloria Steinem** (b. 1934). Founding editor of *Ms.* magazine and co-founder of the Women's Action Alliance, this journalist and essayist is a leading activist and spokesperson for the contemporary feminist movement.

**Ruth Bader Ginsburg** (b. 1935). Appointed by President Bill Clinton, Justice Ginsburg is the second woman appointed to the United States Supreme Court. She was confirmed and installed in 1993.

**Madeleine Korbelt Albright** (b.1937). Appointed by President Bill Clinton, Ms Albright was unanimously confirmed by the United States Senate and was sworn in as the 64<sup>th</sup> Secretary of State on January 23, 1997. Ms Albright was the first female Secretary of State, which made her the highest ranking woman in the history of the U. S. government.

**Geraldine Ferraro** (b. 1935). As a member of the U.S. Congress, she introduced the Private Pension Reform Act, was a member of the Select Committee on Aging and chaired the House Democratic Caucus Task Force on Women's Economic Issues. In 1984, she made American history when Democratic Presidential candidate Walter Mondale tapped her to become the nation's first female vice presidential running mate.

**Barbara Jordan** (1936-1996). Lawyer by training, she was the first African American woman to serve in the Texas Legislature. She went on to become the first black woman from the South ever elected to the U.S. Congress where she served on the House Judiciary Committee and fought for voting rights, school funding and the creation of the Consumer Protection Agency. In 1976 she became the first woman to give the keynote address at the Democratic National Convention.

**Billie Jean King** (b. 1943). Champion of women's tennis and founder of the Women's Tennis Association, the Women's Sport Foundation, and *Women Sports* magazine, this twenty-time Wimbledon titlist became the first woman athlete to earn over \$100,000 in a single year. She has earned worldwide fame and respect both for her athletic ability and her record-breaking earnings as well. as her efforts to promote equity between male and female sports.

**Antonia Novello** (b. 1944). A physician and public health professional, she was the first woman and the first Hispanic to be appointed U.S. Surgeon General. In this capacity, she led the campaign for stronger warnings on cigarette labels, worked to increase public awareness of AIDS and fought against alcohol advertisements aimed at children.

**Wilma Mankiller** (b. 1945). Advocate for American Indian causes, she championed programs for job training, housing, property rights, education and community development and was elected the first woman chief of the Cherokee Nation.

**Candy Lightner** (b. 1946). The death of her thirteen-year-old daughter at the hands of a drunk driver inspired this one-woman crusader to found the now nationwide organizations Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) and Students Against Driving Drunk (SADD). Her campaigns have effected tougher drunk driving laws, helped ensure the passage of the National Minimum Drinking Age Act and led to the establishment of the National Commission on Drunk Driving.

**Hillary Rodham Clinton** (b. 1947). First Lady of the United States from 1993 to 2001, Senator Clinton is currently the junior senator from New York. She is the first past-First Lady to seek and win national elective office.

**Sally Ride** (b. 1951). Beating out more than 8,300 applicants, she became a mission specialist for NASA's space program. In 1983, aboard the space shuttle *Challenger*; this astrophysicist became the first American woman to fly in space.

**Elaine Lan Chao** (b. 1953). Currently serving as the 24<sup>th</sup> Secretary of Labor. She is the first Asian American woman and the first Chinese American to be appointed to the federal cabinet.

**Condoleezza Rice** (b. 1954). Replacing General Colin Powell as Secretary of State, Ms Rice is the second woman and the first African American woman to serve in that post.

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**Sources:** Ashby, Ruth and Deborah Gore Ohm, editors. *Herstory: Woman who Changed the World*. New York: Viking, 1995. Browne, Ray B., editor. *Contemporary Heroes and Heroines*. Detroit, MI: Gale Research Inc., 1990. Cirker, Hayward and Blanche. *Dictionary of American Portraits*. New York: Dover Publications, 1967. deMille, Agnes. *America Dances*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, Inc., 1980. Hopkins, Joseph G.E., editor. *Concise Dictionary of American Biography*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964. Jacobs, William Jay. *Great Lives: Human Rights*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1990. James, Edward T. *Notable American Women 1607-1950: A Biographical Dictionary*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971. Kostman, Samuel. *20th Century Women of Achievement*. New York: Richards Rosen Press, Inc., 1976. Raven, Susan and Alison Weir. *Women of Achievement: Thirty-five Centuries of History*. New York: Harmony Books, 1981. Weatherford, Doris. *A History of the American Suffragist Movement*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC CUO, Inc., 1998.