

ABOUT AMERICA

# WOMEN of INFLUENCE



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# INTRODUCTION



In recent years more and more societies all over the world have begun to recognize the vital contributions of women to commerce, their communities, and civic life. Whether it be Afghan women voting in a presidential election or women starting micro-businesses in Ethiopia, the worldwide trend toward greater equality is clear. Yet “the denial of women’s basic human rights is persistent and widespread,” as a 2005 United Nations Population Fund statement put it.

To commemorate International Women’s Day, March 8, and National Women’s History Month, we have created an electronic publication that highlights the achievements of some notable women in American history and their role in shaping today’s democratic society in the United States. These women — from the Native-American Sacagawea, who guided white settlers through a vast wilderness,

*“Women are the real architects of society.”*

– Writer and abolitionist  
Harriet Beecher Stowe

to Sojourner Truth, who fought for the end of slavery and equal rights for all, to Jeannette Rankin, who spoke for the health of women and children in Congress — believed that they had a contribution to make and did not shrink from the obstacles in their way. This account of their accomplishments is a reminder that all societies benefit from the talents and expertise of their women.

# GUIDING LIGHTS TO A NEW WORLD

The survival of the American colonies and later the newly born United States was never guaranteed — far from it. Settlers in the early 17th century — even in flourishing outposts — could count on harsh living conditions, scarcity of food, disease, and toil. The “lost colony” of Roanoke, Virginia, is ample proof of the difficulties they faced. Two centuries later, in the 1800s, Americans would trek westward across the Mississippi River from the relative comfort of established cities, seeking new territories and access to the Pacific coast. The survival of the colonies and the ability to explore western territories were critical to the establishment and growth of the United States. Two young Native-American women — **Pocahontas** and **Sacagawea** — played a vital role in these efforts.



Pocahontas, after a 1616 engraving by Simon van de Passe.



The Sacagawea gold dollar coin, first minted in 2000.

Both women would act as beacons, literally and figuratively, to the settlers they encountered. While still a child, Pocahontas would serve as a bridge between the first European arrivals and local Indian tribes, saving the life of one explorer and acting as a go-between during times of tense relations between the two groups. Sacagawea would take part in the first U.S. expedition to map the lands west of the Mississippi. She lent her skills in tribal languages and knowledge of western territories to guide the first American explorers safely to the Pacific and back.

# Pocahontas

## A Symbol of Peace

Born: c. 1595/6; Died: 1617

**B**orn around 1595 in the Algonquin tribe of American Indians, Pocahontas became the subject of legend. She was, in fact, a woman who sought to bring peace to the lives of the United States' first settlers and to her own people.

Pocahontas was the daughter of Powhatan, a powerful chief of the Algonquin tribe in the territory of present-day Virginia. Although nobody can be sure, she may have seen European settlers for the first time in the spring of 1607, when Captain John Smith landed with other settlers at Jamestown. Smith himself later would describe a decisive moment in his life during which the young Pocahontas would play a critical role.

According to Smith, he was captured by the Algonquin tribe and threatened with death. Rushing forward and placing herself between Smith and his would-be executioner, young Pocahontas pleaded for the captain's life. Her wish was granted and a friendship developed. Accounts say that Pocahontas went on to befriend the new settlers, bringing them food and delivering messages from her father from time to time.

As tensions arose between the settlers and the Algonquin tribe, an Englishman by the name of Samuel Argall kidnapped the young girl, holding her for ransom until he agreed to terms of settlement. After relations between the Algonquin and settlers had improved, Pocahontas was married to Englishman John Rolfe. Although the timing is unclear, Pocahontas had, by the time of her marriage, converted to Christianity under the name "Rebecca." Importantly for the future of the United States, the marriage helped to calm tensions between settlers and the Algonquin.

In 1616, she made a well-publicized journey to England by ship, along with her husband and their young son. Pocahontas was presented to King James



Pocahontas

I and to the royal family. Perhaps the most thrilling moment for her was meeting Captain Smith, whom she had believed dead for many years. Tragically, Pocahontas contracted a fatal disease on the trip home and died in March 1617. She was buried in Gravesend, England.

Despite her short life, Pocahontas's romantic story continued to appeal to the American imagination. It has become the subject of much myth-making, as witnessed by the many stories, books, paintings and even films — most recently *The New World* — based on her life, and the towns, school buildings, and even a Civil War fort named after her.

# Sacagawea

## An Explorer of Extraordinary Talent

Born: c. 1786; Died: December 20, 1812

A member of the Lemhi band of the Shoshone Indian tribe in present-day Idaho, Sacagawea demonstrated her strength and intelligence during the 1804-1806 Lewis and Clark expedition to explore the lands leading to the Pacific Coast of North America.

Early in her life, Sacagawea (a name possibly meaning “Boat Launcher” or “Bird Woman”) was captured by a rival tribe. She was either sold or traded to a French-Canadian fur trader by the name of Toussaint Charbonneau, whom she later married. At approximately 16 years old, Sacagawea gave birth to a son in the vicinity of Fort Mandan in the Dakota territories of the western United States.

In 1805, her husband was hired to assist a newly formed expedition, led by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, and charged by President Thomas Jefferson with finding a passage to the Pacific. Sacagawea, who spoke several Indian dialects, quickly proved herself — as an interpreter, as a guide, as a symbol to various tribes of the expedition’s peaceful intentions, and even as a diplomat when the expedition encountered the Lemhi band, over which her brother was now chief. She arranged for the Lemhi to provide horses, provisions, and shelter, the very things that made the journey possible. Sacagawea transported and cared for her infant son, Jean Baptiste, throughout the difficult journey.

Following the expedition, Sacagawea and her husband lived for a time in St. Louis before returning to the Dakotas. She is widely believed to have died in 1812, although an elderly woman claiming to be Sacagawea passed away in 1884. In 2000, an artist’s imaginary rendering of Sacagawea cradling her son was added to U.S. currency on a dollar coin.



Sacagawea, from a drawing by E.S. Paxson.

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*“... the sight of This Indian woman, wife to one of our interprs. confirmed those people of our friendly intentions, as no woman ever accompanies a war party of Indians in this quarter.”*

October 19, 1805, William Clark

# THE COLONIAL ERA

The European immigrants that colonized British North America in the 17<sup>th</sup> century brought the Old Continent's social and political mores with them. But soon the colonists began to drift away from England, influenced by their new environment, the mix of nationalities and religions, and English traditions of political liberty. An American identity began to emerge. It encompassed, among other traits, increased religious tolerance, an affinity for political liberty and representative government, social mobility, and a tough individualism. This period also saw the establishment of the foundations of American culture and education.

The thousands of women colonists of this era made huge contributions to the settlements of the New World. They raised children and educated them as they cleared the wilderness alongside their husbands, built cabins, and made or traded basic necessities. Women were the mainstays of church and community.



Anne Marbury Hutchinson



Painting of Anne Dudley Bradstreet by LaDonna Gulley Warrick.

The achievements of the two women named Anne — Hutchinson and Bradstreet — highlight the courage, confidence, and devotion to learning it took to create a nation out of primitive surroundings. Hutchinson was an early advocate of religious freedom who refused to betray her principles despite the threat of exile. The poet Bradstreet, in turn, was the first to touch on the New World experiences that give U.S. literature its distinctive voice.

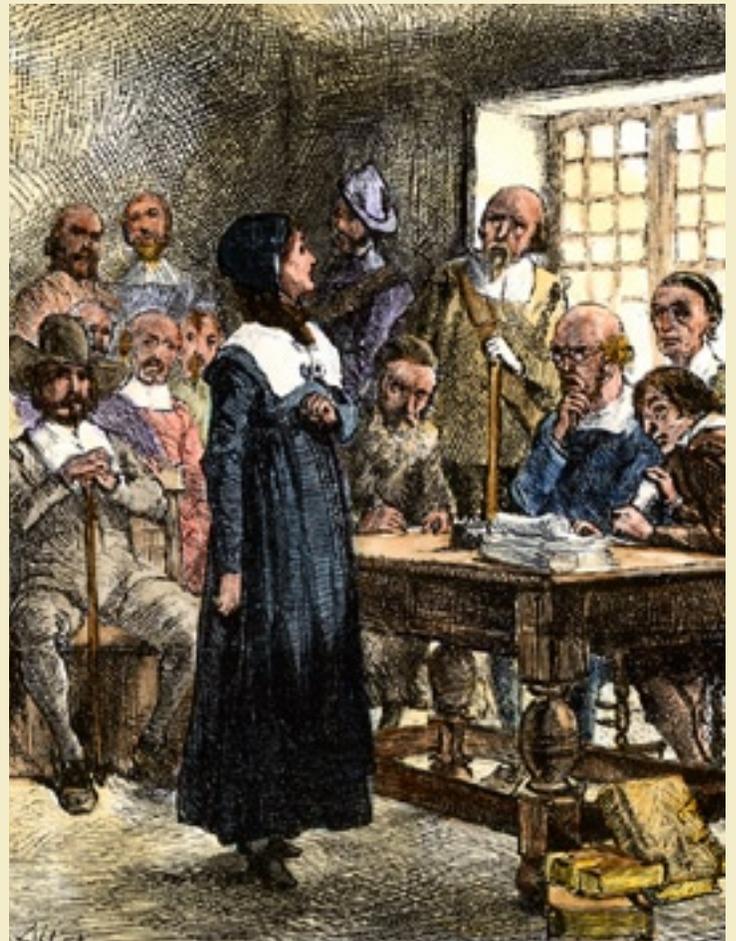
# Anne Marbury Hutchinson

“Courageous Exponent of Civil Liberty and Religious Toleration”

Born: 1591; Died: August/September 1643

The core American concepts of freedom of religion and freedom of speech had one of their earliest advocates in Anne Marbury Hutchinson. Born in England to a dissenting Anglican clergyman and his wife, she married the merchant William Hutchinson in 1612 and bore him 15 children, according to most sources. Yearning for greater freedom to practice her religious beliefs, in 1634 she persuaded her husband to follow her beloved minister, John Cotton, to the Massachusetts Bay Colony, today’s Boston.

Then her troubles began. Well-educated and not afraid to speak her mind, Anne Hutchinson began inviting devout women to her home to reflect on Cotton’s sermons. As her reputation grew, the gatherings attracted men, too, including the governor, Henry Vane. In addition to stepping outside the bounds of conventional women’s behavior, her denunciation of the colony’s ministers and her belief that “he who has God’s grace in his heart cannot go astray” set her at odds with the religious establishment. They moved to prosecute the woman Massachusetts’s new governor, John Winthrop, criticized for having “a very voluble tongue, more bold than a man.” According to Harvard professor Rev. Peter J. Gomes, at her trial “she bested the best of the ... Colony’s male preachers, theologians, and magistrates.” Despite her vigorous defense of her beliefs, she was excommunicated and banished in 1638, and moved with her family and other followers to Rhode Island. She is considered one of the founders of that colony, the first to establish complete separation of church and state and freedom of religion in what would become the United States. After her husband’s death in 1642, Anne Hutchinson moved to Long Island, in New York. Tragically, she and all of her children save one were killed there in an Indian raid.



Woodcut depicting Anne Hutchinson’s sentencing to be banished from the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

“Courageous Exponent of Civil Liberty and Religious Toleration” says the inscription at the bottom of a statue raised in her honor in Boston. But the most fitting tribute to Anne Hutchinson’s influence — proof that her ideals ultimately prevailed over her opponents’ — is the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”

# Anne Dudley Bradstreet

“The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung Up in America”

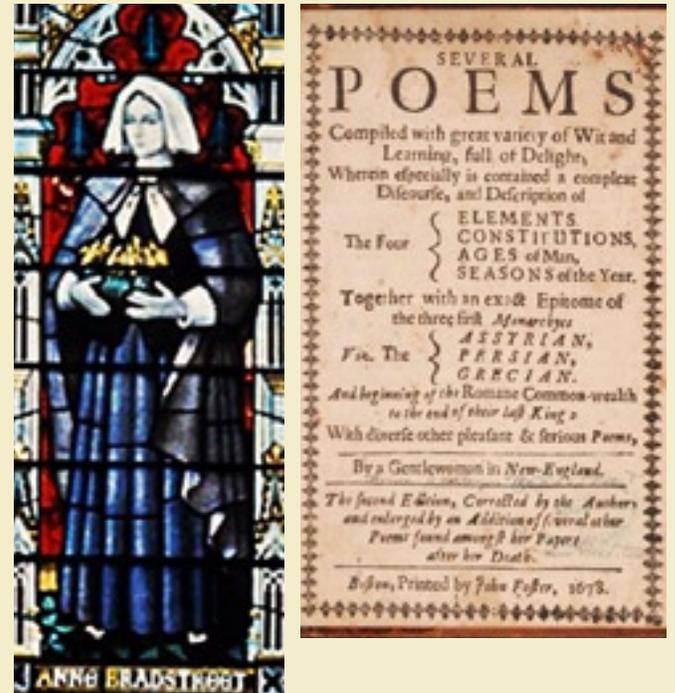
Born: c. 1612; Died: September 16, 1672

The first important American poet, Anne Dudley Bradstreet was born in England of prosperous parents who had embraced the Puritan faith. She was married at 16 to Simon Bradstreet. With her parents and husband, she sailed to North America in 1630 as a member of the Puritan group that founded the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Unlike most women at that time, Anne Bradstreet grew up with a love of books and received an excellent education in literature, history, and the classics. She wrote poems while she raised eight children, kept a home, and served as a hostess for her husband, a governor of the colony.

Her brother-in-law took her poems to England without her knowledge. They were published there in 1650 as *The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung Up in America*. Ironically, these — the only poems published during her lifetime — are today considered her least interesting. Inspired by English metaphysical poets, they are long and often dull, dealing with conventional subjects such as religion as seen through the seasons. Contemporary critics and defenders of her work prefer her witty poems on daily life and her warm and loving verses to her husband and children, including one on her feelings upon the death of a month-old grandchild.

Her writings and the few records that remain about Anne Bradstreet reveal her to be a woman of high intelligence and courage. She was painfully aware of her society’s disapproval of women who ventured beyond their domestic duties. In one of her poems, she proclaimed, “I am obnoxious to each carping tongue,/That says my hand a needle better fits!” And she dared to remain a friend of Anne Hutchinson, even as the men in the colony, including her husband and father, worked to banish the dissenter from their ranks.

Anne Bradstreet’s literary gifts; her exploration of the universal themes of devotion to family,



Left, Anne Bradstreet, stained glass in St. Botolph's Church, Boston, Lincolnshire, England. Right, the frontispiece to the 1650 edition of *The Tenth Muse*.

## To my Dear and Loving Husband

If ever two were one, then surely we.  
If ever man were lov'd by wife, then thee.  
If ever wife was happy in a man,  
Compare with me, ye women, if you can.  
I prize thy love more than whole Mines of gold,  
Or all the riches that the East doth hold.  
My love is such that Rivers cannot quench,  
Nor ought but love from thee give recompence.  
Thy love is such I can no way repay.  
The heavens reward thee manifold, I pray.  
Then while we live, in love let's so persevere,  
That when we live no more, we may live ever.

“To my Dear and Loving Husband” is reprinted from *Several Poems*. Anne Bradstreet. Boston: John Foster, 1678.

love, and loss; and her courage in standing by controversial friends make her an attractive model for women — and men — everywhere.

# BIRTH OF A NATION

**G**reat men — leaders like George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Alexander Hamilton — dominate accounts of the War for Independence (1775-1783) that gave birth to the United States of America. These Founding Fathers also have the starring role during the difficult period that followed independence, when the young nation struggled to give legal form to the ideals expressed in the Declaration of Independence. They wrote the Constitution with its Bill of Rights, persuaded the autonomous 13 states to join in a “more perfect Union,” and created the nation’s democratic government.

American women played a large, if until recently often unacknowledged, role during this era. Many tended the family farms and businesses while the men were fighting the war or fashioning the peace.



Portrait of Abigail Adams by Benjamin Blythe, 1766.



Margaret Corbin, illustration by Herbert Knotel.

Others went to battle side by side with the men, nursing the sick and burying the dead. In the stories of Abigail Adams and Margaret Corbin, we see that women in the revolutionary era were as ardently patriotic as the men and were equally determined to enjoy “liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” Adams with a pen and Corbin behind a cannon showed that women were valuable partners in the creation of a democratic nation that today guarantees equal rights to all its citizens.

# Abigail Smith Adams

“Remember the Ladies ...”

Born: November 11, 1744; Died: October 28, 1818

Wife of the second president of the United States and mother of the sixth, Abigail Adams’s multiple claims to fame also rest on her championing of women’s rights, including the right to an education. Her voluminous correspondence is full of wit and vivid insights into the early years of her beloved nation. She shared and helped shape her husband’s political thought and career, and excelled in the management of their farm and finances.

Born at Weymouth, Massachusetts, Abigail Adams lacked a formal education, as did most women of that time. She was, nevertheless, an ardent reader from an early age. She married John Adams in 1764. Their 54-year union — as reflected in their letters to each other — was warm, loving, and intellectually lively. Her husband’s frequent travels meant long separations, so she raised their four surviving children and managed their home affairs on her own, all the while acting as her husband’s chief political confidant. In 1776, she made her strongest appeal for women’s rights in a letter to Adams, then a member of the Continental Congress that declared independence from Britain. “In the new Code of Laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make I desire you would Remember the Ladies,” she wrote, “and be more generous and favourable to them than your ancestors.” Her plea was the first call for the equality that American women would gradually achieve. When George Washington’s army was facing certain destruction later that year, she boldly wrote that the British forces instead would be opposed by “a race of Amazons in America.”

Abigail Adams joined her husband in Paris and London when he served as diplomatic representative of the new nation. She dutifully acted as his hostess when he became the country’s first vice president,



Engraved portrait of First Lady and author Abigail Adams.

in 1789, and president, in 1797. Defeated by Thomas Jefferson in the 1800 election, Adams retired to their home in Massachusetts, where he and Abigail enjoyed their remaining years until her death in 1818. On that sad occasion, her son John Quincy Adams, a future president, paid her this tender tribute in his journal, “There is not a virtue that can abide in the female heart but it was the ornament of hers.”

# Margaret Cochran Corbin

“The First American Woman to Take a Soldier’s Part in the War for Liberty”

Born: November 12, 1751; Died: c. 1800

**M**argaret Cochran Corbin fought alongside her husband in the first two years of the War for Independence. She was the first woman whose valor and sacrifice were recognized with a U.S. government pension for disabled soldiers.

Born near Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, Corbin was orphaned at age five when Indian raiders killed both her parents. She married John Corbin when she was 21 and accompanied him when he joined the First Company of Pennsylvania Artillery for service in the Continental Army. Like the other women who followed the troops, she cooked, washed clothes, and tended the sick or wounded. On November 16, 1776, British and Hessian troops attacked Fort Mifflin, New York, and John Corbin, one of the soldiers firing cannons in defense, was shot and killed. Margaret Corbin, at his side to help him load the cannon, took over loading and firing the cannon until she was hit by grapeshot, which tore her shoulder and wounded her in the chest and jaw.

Her fellow soldiers took her to a hospital in Philadelphia, but she never fully recovered from her wounds, and was left with a disabled left arm. In recognition of her bravery, the Continental Congress granted her a lifetime soldier’s half-pay pension. She was formally mustered out of the Continental Army in April 1783. Known by neighbors as “Captain Molly,” she died near West Point, New York, probably before her 50th birthday. In 1926, the Daughters of the American Revolution re-interred her remains at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. A bronze plaque to



Corbin in a sketch by Herbert Knotel.

Margaret Corbin’s grave at the West Point Cemetery in New York.

“the first American woman to take a soldier’s part in the War for Liberty” commemorates her courage and initiative near the place of the battle, in today’s Fort Tryon Park, New York City.

# BREAKING THE CHAINS OF SLAVERY

At the mid-19th century, America was paradoxically both a freedom-loving and a slave-holding society. In places along the eastern seaboard, slavery was more than 200 years old and an integral part of the economy of the South. But as the century advanced, an increasingly assertive abolitionist movement called attention to the gulf between the nation's ideals and the practice of slavery in the Southern half. Tensions grew and, in 1861, erupted into civil war. It took four years of bloody warfare before the North, under Abraham Lincoln's leadership, prevailed, a result that sealed the end of slavery in the United States.

Women were vital to the emancipation movement, and several stood out as leaders. Former slaves Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth, featured in the next two pages, gave personal testimony to the evils of slavery. A third figure, Harriet Beecher Stowe, a white woman, wrote her famous book, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, in 1852. The novel inspired widespread enthusiasm for the antislavery cause, particularly in the rising generation of voters in the North. It secured Stowe's place in history as an ardent abolitionist. And, just like Tubman and Truth, she became a celebrity, speaking against slavery at many gatherings.



Harriet Tubman

Sojourner Truth

The freeing of the black population and the granting of voting rights to male African Americans made many women recognize their own unequal position in society. Emancipation adherents like Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Tubman, and Truth later became advocates for the emerging women's rights movement.

Times were changing and women seized the opportunity to take increasing control of their lives. By great personal sacrifice and perseverance, women like Tubman and Truth dedicated their lives to noble goals: freedom from the tyranny of slavery, and human rights for all.

# Harriet Tubman

## Leader of the Underground Railroad

Born: c. 1820; Died: March 10, 1913

**B**orn a slave in Dorchester County, Maryland, Harriet Tubman was an extraordinary African-American woman who courageously freed herself from slavery by running away to safe haven in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In 1850, when the Fugitive Slave Act made it illegal to help a runaway slave, Tubman decided to join the “Underground Railroad,” the network of people who helped slaves to their freedom.

The Underground Railroad, neither underground nor a railroad, was an elaborate and secret series of houses, tunnels, and roads set up by abolitionists and former slaves as a way out of the oppressive South. Harriet knew these routes so well that she was never captured and never failed to deliver her passengers to safety. She began an intensive speaking tour in 1860, calling not only for the abolition of slavery, but also for a redefinition of women’s rights.

She guided 300 slaves through the Underground Railroad in the years leading up to the Civil War. Tubman made the perilous trip to slave country 19 times. On one trip she rescued her 70-year-old parents, bringing them to Auburn, New York. Auburn became her home, as well.

In 1861, when the Civil War began, she served as a nurse, spy, and scout for the Union forces. Well acquainted with the countryside from her days as a “conductor” on the Underground Railroad, she was considered especially valuable as a scout.

Owing to inefficiency and perhaps lingering racial discrimination, Tubman was denied a government pension after the war and struggled financially for many years. She pressed to advance the status of women and blacks, to shelter orphans and elderly poor people.



Harriet Tubman, far left, whose talents as Underground Railroad scout freed 300 slaves before the Civil War.



Painting by Paul Collins of Harriet Tubman’s Underground Railroad.

Eventually she did receive a small pension from the U.S. Army, most of which she spent in 1908 to build a wooden structure that served as a home for the aged and needy in Auburn, New York. She worked in that home and was herself cared for in it the last few years before her death in 1913.

# Sojourner Truth

Antislavery Activist, Advocate of Women's Rights

Born: c. 1797; Died: November 26, 1883

An ardent abolitionist and a proponent of women's rights, Sojourner Truth found her voice in the early 1840s. She was born a slave named Isabella Baumfree.

She took the name of Sojourner Truth because she felt God had called her "to travel up and down the land, showing the people their sins and being a sign unto them."

After a difficult life as a youth in Ulster County, New York, she labored for a succession of five masters until New York State abolished slavery on the Fourth of July, 1827. Soon she moved to New York City and began to speak out against the evils of slavery. She was an imposing figure — almost six feet tall — with a powerful, resonant voice, who vividly described the abuses of slavery and the hardships she had endured.

Truth was self-educated and possessed a quick wit and a charisma that often drew large crowds. Facing a heckler in an audience once who said he did not care for her anti-slavery speech anymore than he would a bite of a flea, Truth replied, "Perhaps not, but Lord willing I'll keep you scratching."

A staunch supporter of suffrage, Sojourner Truth became a national symbol for strong black women, and for all strong women. Her speech, "Ain't I a Woman," given at the 1851 Women's Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio, has become a classic text on women's rights.

During the Civil War she gathered supplies for black volunteer regiments and she was involved in various political causes. In tribute to her efforts, President Lincoln received her at the White House in 1864. She was appointed to the National Freedman's Relief Association in the same year, where she worked to better conditions for all African Americans.



Abraham Lincoln reading the Bible with abolitionist Sojourner Truth. Baltimore's black community presented this print to the president to commemorate the Emancipation Proclamation.

After the Civil War, she set out on a final unsuccessful crusade to gain support for her dream of a land distribution program for former slaves. By this time she had made her home in Battle Creek, Michigan, where, surrounded by her family and friends, she died in 1883.

On the 200th anniversary of Sojourner Truth's birth, NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory announced that the name for their Mars Pathfinder rover would be "Sojourner," a fitting tribute to the 19th-century abolitionist and champion of women's rights.

# A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO VOTE

The 19th-century drive to secure equal rights for women arose in part as well-educated women involved themselves in other social issues. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott met in 1840 at an anti-slavery conference in London. Unhappy at being excluded from activities of the convention because of their gender, Stanton, Mott, and other female delegates staged a walkout, then began planning a similar convention on women's rights. It took place in Seneca Falls, New York, eight years later.

The Seneca Falls Convention drafted a "Declaration of Sentiments" based on the U.S. Declaration of Independence that had, in 1776, separated the United States from Britain. The declaration set the agenda for the movement: the right of women to their children in the event of a divorce, the right to testify against a cruel husband in court, the right of women to enter various kinds of jobs and to keep their salaries instead of turning money over to their husbands, and — the most controversial at that time — the right of women to vote.

The political insight of Stanton and her equally famous partner in the 19th-century women's rights movement, Susan B. Anthony, was that in order to change society, you have to change public opinion first. Both women were bent on propagating ideas: Stanton through her writing, Anthony through personal leadership and extensive lecture tours. In addition, both women realized that freedom and liberty for some groups essentially means freedom and liberty for all groups.



Left, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and right, Susan B. Anthony, c. 1870s.

Arguing from the abolition of Negro slavery, they aimed to convince Americans in the late 19th century that women, like former slaves, deserved well-defined and legally protected rights. Finally, they both realized that universal, fair, and free elections are necessary to allow all members of society to express their needs in an effective way.

# Elizabeth Cady Stanton

“The Mother of Woman Suffrage”

Born: November 12, 1815; Died: October 26, 1902

Elizabeth Cady Stanton was one of the major forces behind the empowerment of women in the United States and throughout the world. In particular, she was a founder and leader of the 19th-century women’s rights movement, which in 1920 won American women the right to vote.

Born in 1815 to a father who was a prominent New York state congressman and judge, Stanton read law informally under her father’s tutelage, and discovered an early vocation to reform the law of the day so it would treat men and women equally. In 1840, she married Henry Brewster Stanton, a lawyer, orator, and abolitionist. This marriage gave her a further entrée into politically progressive circles. In 1848, Elizabeth Stanton helped persuade the New York legislature to enact laws protecting the property rights of married women, and in July of that year, along with feminist Lucretia Mott, she helped lead the first women’s rights convention in the United States and probably the world, in the New York town of Seneca Falls. The convention passed numerous resolutions appealing for rights for women, and — significantly — a demand for female suffrage (the right to vote) in the Declaration of Sentiments, a document modeled on the U.S. Declaration of Independence.

Elizabeth Stanton gave birth to seven children between 1842 and 1859, but this scarcely diminished her enthusiasm for her work. During the U.S. Civil War, she and her husband worked to abolish slavery, later splitting with other progressives over the lack of emphasis given to the votes-for-women issue.

Around 1850, Stanton began her association with Susan B. Anthony, also a leader in the movement to give women the right to vote. Their 50-year-long collaboration benefited from Stanton’s skills as the better orator and writer and Anthony’s as the organizer and tactician. “I forged the



Elizabeth Cady Stanton, in a photo from her book, *Eighty Years and More: 1815-1897*.

thunderbolts,” Stanton said of their partnership, “and she fired them.” Stanton became famous as president of the National Woman Suffrage Association, and also lectured on topics such as maternity, divorce law, and the social effect of liquor, which some felt destroyed homes, marriages, and lives. After 1880 she retired to collaborate with Anthony in the *History of Woman Suffrage*. She died in 1902, having created a national agenda for women’s political and social equality that was to be realized in decades following.

# Susan Brownell Anthony

“Incomparable Organizer” of Women’ Rights Movement

Born: February 15, 1820; Died: March 13, 1906

**L**ike Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony came from the Northeast, and began her life under the tutelage of a strong-willed father. Born in Adams, Massachusetts, Anthony grew up in the home of a successful businessman, Quaker, and abolitionist. She was known as a gifted child, reportedly able to read and write at the age of three.

In her mid-20s Anthony began a teaching career, eventually settling in the Rochester, New York, area as the headmistress of a local school. She was drawn towards the “temperance” movement, a political and religious movement that viewed alcohol consumption as the root of social and familial ills, and campaigned against the “bottle.” Feeling marginalized and unable to speak in a male-dominated organization, Anthony and some friends founded the Woman’s State Temperance Society of New York. Around 1850 she met Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and joined her in the larger crusade for women’s rights.

Unlike Stanton, Anthony never married, and put all her time and energy into political organizing. Anthony worked as a member of the American Anti-Slavery Society from 1856 until the outbreak of the U.S. Civil War in 1861 and continued to work for slaves’ emancipation during the war. With Stanton, she engaged in petition drives for women’s rights, founded a progressive magazine, *The Revolution*, and helped organize the New York Working Women’s Association. With the adoption in 1870 of the 15th Amendment, all citizens were guaranteed the right to vote regardless of “race, color, or previous condition of servitude,” but not regardless of gender. Appalled at this situation, Anthony took direct action, leading a group of women to the polls in



Susan B. Anthony, 1899.

Rochester. Arrested and awaiting trial, she took advantage of the publicity to begin a lecture tour. In 1873, she again engaged in civil disobedience, again trying to vote. She was denied the right to testify at her own trial because of her sex and given a light fine, which she refused to pay. Spurred on by the fight and the attendant publicity, she worked more vigorously than ever to secure American women the right to vote — through national organizations and individual lecture tours in eastern states and western territories.

In 1888, Anthony organized the International Council of Women and in 1904 the International Woman Suffrage Alliance, bringing her crusade to the international level with meetings in London and Berlin. She died in 1906 — four years after Stanton — but their work paved the way for the ratification of the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution which, in 1920, granted American women the right to vote.

# A ROLE IN GOVERNMENT

The first half of the 20th century saw the United States transformed into a world power after emerging victorious from two world wars and overcoming a depression. Economic and social reforms gave workers and their families improved standards of living and African-Americans increasing hope that, at last, they could secure racial equality.

These years also saw women making breakthrough gains in fields long considered outside their traditional roles as wives, mothers, and caretakers. Many attended college or took up jobs in industry while the men fought World War II. Winning the vote in 1920 inspired women to countless other victories in the arenas of politics and government. The western state of Montana, which gave women the vote before the nation as a whole did in 1920, elected Jeannette Rankin as the first female representative to Congress. Soon hundreds and then thousands of women ran for city, county, state, and national office. These included Connecticut's Ella Grasso, the first woman elected as governor on her own right; Lorna Lockwood, the first woman elected



Jeannette Rankin



Hattie Caraway

to a state's supreme court; and several who have run for president or vice-president of the United States, including Shirley Chisholm and Elizabeth Dole. Appointees to office like Eleanor Roosevelt at the United Nations, Sandra Day O'Connor in the Supreme Court, and Condoleezza Rice at the State Department also are among the many notable women whose talents have enriched political life in the United States and abroad. But their story starts with trailblazers like Jeannette Rankin and Hattie Caraway.

# Jeannette Pickering Rankin

First Woman Member of the U.S. Congress

Born: June 11, 1880; Died: May 18, 1973

Jeannette Rankin took her seat in the U.S. House of Representatives — the first woman to be elected to either chamber — on April 2, 1917. It would be another three years before women throughout the United States earned the right to vote.

Rankin, born in Montana, was an energetic young woman with a zest for politics and a life-long devotion to feminist and pacifist causes. With a degree from the New York School of Philanthropy (later Columbia University's School of Social Work), she became a social worker in Seattle, in Washington State. To gain first-hand knowledge of her clients' condition, she worked for a while as a seamstress. Rankin joined the 1910 suffrage drive in Washington and led the successful campaign in 1914 for women's suffrage in Montana. The new women voters in Montana helped Rankin become one of the few Republicans elected to Congress in 1916.

Seeing it as her "special duty" to speak for American women, she helped draft legislation helping women and children and supported a constitutional amendment to give women the right to vote. She did not stay in Congress long enough to see suffrage extended to all American women in 1920, however. Voters rejected her bid to become a senator in 1918, probably because of her vote against U.S. entry into the First World War a year earlier.

Rankin returned to social work and to reform organizations, such as the National Consumers' League, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and — in 1919 — attended the Second International Congress of Women in Zurich. Re-elected to Congress in 1940, she cast the only vote in Congress against war on Japan after the attack on Pearl Harbor. With her political career ended by this unpopular vote, Rankin devoted the rest of her life to her favorite causes. At age 86, for instance, she participated in the March of Washington opposing the Vietnam War.



Jeannette Rankin addresses a rally at Union Square, New York, September 1924.

Jeannette Rankin understood the importance of engaging women's talents and expertise to build better societies. "Men and women are like right and left hands; it doesn't make sense not to use both," she said. In her will, she left money to ensure that women could get an education to help improve society. The Jeannette Rankin Foundation, one of the many legacies of this determined and committed American, has been providing educational opportunity to low-income women since it was chartered in 1976.

# Hattie Ophelia Wyatt Caraway

First Woman Elected to U.S. Senate

Born: February 1, 1878; Died: December 21, 1950

**H**attie Caraway was the first woman elected to the U.S. Senate in her own right.

A native of Tennessee, she earned a degree from Dickson Normal College. There, she met Thaddeus H. Caraway, married him in 1902, and had three sons. The family moved to Arkansas, where Thaddeus Caraway was elected to the U.S. Congress in 1912, and to the U.S. Senate in 1920. After he died unexpectedly in 1931, Arkansas Governor Harvey Parnell appointed Hattie Caraway to her late husband's seat. A special election January 12, 1932, confirmed her appointment. Before Hattie Caraway was elected, only one woman – Rebecca Latimer Felton – had served as a courtesy appointment for one day, also as a result of a senator's death.

In contrast to the outspoken Jeannette Rankin, Hattie Caraway made no speeches nor did she take on unpopular causes. Such was her restraint, as a matter of fact, that she earned the nickname "Silent Hattie." She was a diligent public servant, however, taking her responsibilities seriously and building a reputation for integrity. A Democrat, she routinely supported President Franklin D. Roosevelt and New Deal legislation on behalf of veterans and organized labor.

"Silent Hattie" spoke up and took everyone by surprise on May 9, 1932. Invited to become the first woman to preside over the Senate, she announced to the reporters gathered for the event that she was running for re-election. She won that election, thanks in part to Senator Huey Long of Louisiana,



Sen. Hattie Caraway, shown with Sen. Joseph Guffey (left), as she becomes the first woman to preside over an open meeting of a Senate Committee in Washington, D.C., February 26, 1936.

who campaigned hard for her. In the 1940s she signed on as a co-sponsor of the proposed Equal Rights Amendment. She left the Senate in 1945, after being defeated by William Fulbright. In a typical understatement, she summed up her fourth-place showing, "The people are speaking."

Her career in public service was not over, however. Roosevelt appointed her to the U.S. (federal) Employees' Compensation Commission and later to the Employees' Compensation Appeals Board. In January 1950, she suffered a stroke and resigned her post. She died at the close of that year. Her correspondence and other papers tracing her years in office were published under the title *Silent Hattie Speaks: The Personal Journal of Senator Hattie Caraway*.

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