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## **THE ROOTS OF THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN PHILADELPHIA'S HISTORIC DISTRICT** *Women's History Cuts A Path Through America's Most Historic Square Mile*

**PHILADELPHIA, March 5, 2018** – Philadelphia's Historic District, site of the original city and birthplace of the nation, has, for centuries, been home to some of the strongest, bravest women America has known. The Historic District's history-making women include both well-known herioness—enslaved African refugee **Oney Judge**, flag maker **Betsy Ross**, abolitionist **Lucretia Mott**—and less well-known pioneers—Rosa Parks precursor **Caroline LeCount**, medical trailblazer **Ann Preston** and LGBT-rights activist **Barbara Gittings**—to name a few. Here's a list of 19 women who, from the 17<sup>th</sup> Century on, made history in Philadelphia's Historic District, along with the places to trace their trails today:

### **17<sup>th</sup> Century:**

1. **Hannah Callowhill Penn (1671-1726)** – Callowhill, of Bristol, England, became the second wife of **William Penn**, founder of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania, in 1696. Three years later, at age 28, she accompanied her husband on his second and final trip to the Colonies. In 1712, after the Penns returned to England, William suffered a series of strokes, and Callowhill Penn took over managing the family's proprietorship in Pennsylvania, overseeing two changes of deputy governors and advising and instructing on their governance; negotiating disputes over the Pennsylvania-Maryland border, and resolving disputes with the English government over laws passed in Pennsylvania. She continued her work for 14 years, until her death. In 1984, Callowhill Penn became the first woman Honorary Citizen of the United States. March 12 is Hannah Callowhill Penn Day in Pennsylvania. **Welcome Park** (site of the Penns' Slate Roof House), 2<sup>nd</sup> Street between Walnut & Sansom Streets; Pennsbury Manor, (the Penns' recreated summer home), 400 Pennsbury Memorial Road, Morrisville, (215) 946-0400, [pennsburymanor.org](http://pennsburymanor.org)

### **18<sup>th</sup> Century:**

2. **Elizabeth Willing Powel (1742-1830)** – Born to a politically elite family, Powel established her husband **Samuel Powel** as an important figure in early Philadelphia politics. When Samuel served as Mayor of Philadelphia, the couple's home on South 3<sup>rd</sup> Street became the center of social and political life, and Elizabeth struck up a friendship with **George Washington**. So close were Powel and Washington, she convinced him to run for a second term as president. After her husband died of yellow fever, Powel remained outspoken on matters of politics and served on the Female Association of Philadelphia for the Relief of Women and Children in Reduced Circumstances and the Female Hospitable Society. **Powel House**, 244 S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, (215) 627-0364, [philalandmarks.org](http://philalandmarks.org); **St. Peter's Church**, 300 Pine Street, (215) 925-5968, [stpetersphila.org](http://stpetersphila.org)

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3. **Esther de Berdt Reed (1746-1780)** – Born in London, England, de Berdt moved to Philadelphia after marrying American lawyer **Joseph Reed** in 1770. In 1780, the fifth year of the Revolutionary War, she created the Ladies Association of Philadelphia to raise funds to assist the Continental Army, which had been suffering from food and clothing shortages. Esther strategically invited the wives of influential men to join her effort and published and distributed a broadside entitled, *Sentiments of an American Woman* to urge more women to help the Continental Army. The Ladies Association became the largest women's Revolutionary War organization, raising a large sum of money for the army and stitching much-needed shirts for the American soldiers. De Berdt Reed died shortly after creating the Ladies Association, and **Sarah Franklin Bache** (Benjamin Franklin's daughter) stepped in to continue her project. **Benjamin Franklin House**, between 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Streets and Market & Chestnut Streets, (215) 965-2305, [nps.gov/inde](https://www.nps.gov/inde)
4. **Betsy Ross (1752-1836)** – Ross, a lifelong Philadelphian and a Quaker until eloping with Anglican **John Ross** in 1773, was 24 and widowed, an upholsterer on Arch Street when *Declaration of Independence* signers **George Washington**, **George Ross, Jr.** (the uncle of her late husband) and **Robert Morris** asked her to stitch a flag. But her life is more than that single flag. Not only did Ross' upholstery clients include Washington and **Benjamin Franklin**, she also stitched hundreds of flags for the United States government, including flags that flew in the War of 1812 and flags sent as gifts on official diplomatic relations with Native Americans. At home, she lost two husbands to the Revolutionary War and cared for a third in his late life illness, reared five daughters, brought many orphaned nieces into her home and survived the yellow fever epidemic that took the lives of both her parents and a sister, living until age 84. **Betsy Ross House**, 239 Arch Street, (215) 686-1252, [historicphiladelphia.org](https://www.historicphiladelphia.org); **Free Quaker Meeting House**, 500 Arch Street, (215) 965-2305, [nps.gov/inde](https://www.nps.gov/inde); **Christ Church**, 20 N. American Street, (215) 922-1695, [christchurchphila.org](https://www.christchurchphila.org)
5. **Margaret “Peggy” Shippen Arnold (1760-1804)** – This notorious Revolutionary War spy belonged to a prominent Philadelphia family of Loyalist sympathizers who hosted parties for British officers when the British occupied Philadelphia. A young Shippen and her friends were known for sending coded messages—both romantic and strategic in nature—past enemy lines. At age 18, Shippen set her sights on Continental Army **General Benedict Arnold**, resident of the Masters-Penn House (later The President's House). The couple married in 1779, as Arnold became increasingly disillusioned with the American cause. The next summer, Arnold schemed to surrender West Point to the British, sending secret papers through Shippen's longtime friend, British **Major John André**, who was discovered and hanged as a traitor for his actions. Arnold, however, escaped capture when Shippen delayed **General Washington's** pursuit of her husband by claiming no knowledge of his activities and feigning hysteria during a meeting with the general. In December 1781, the couple and their two young children departed for England, where Arnold died in 1801 and Shippen died in 1804, at age 44. **The President's House**, 6<sup>th</sup> & Market Streets, (215) 965-2305, [nps.gov/inde](https://www.nps.gov/inde); Mount Pleasant, 3800 Mount Pleasant Drive, (215) 684-7926, [parkcharms.com/mount-pleasant](https://www.parkcharms.com/mount-pleasant)
6. **Dolley Payne Todd Madison (1768-1849)** – Payne Todd was born in New Garden, North Carolina and moved with her family to Philadelphia at age 15. She was living in the city with her husband, John, when yellow fever swept through in 1793, killing her husband, their infant son and her parents-in-law. Less than a year later, in May 1794, **James Madison**, serving in Congress in Philadelphia, asked his friend **Aaron Burr** to introduce him to Payne Todd. The two married in that September and lived in Philadelphia for three more years. While James Madison served as Secretary of State under President **Thomas Jefferson**, a widower, Payne Todd Madison performed the duties of first lady, hosting receptions and events.

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In 1808, James Madison was elected president and Payne Todd Madison officially assumed and mastered the role of First Lady, becoming popular and respected for her brilliant hosting and conversation. During the War of 1812, Dolley became well known (if not entirely accurately) for saving important government papers and a portrait of George Washington when invading British troops were torching Washington, DC. **Dolley Todd House**, 143 S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, (215) 965-2305, [nps.gov/inde](https://www.nps.gov/inde)

7. **Oney “Ona” Judge (1773-1848)** – Born into slavery at Mount Vernon, Virginia, Judge was brought, enslaved, to Philadelphia as **Martha Washington’s** personal servant while **George Washington** served as the first U.S. President. Judge labored in the President’s House at 6<sup>th</sup> and Market Streets until 1796, when she made a daring escape from enslavement, with help from Philadelphia’s sizable free Black community. Judge managed to evade recapture, despite many attempts (by none other than the president himself). She eventually settled in New Hampshire, where she married, had three children and worked as a paid domestic servant. She never again saw her family members, including her mother, who remained enslaved by the Washington family. **The President’s House**, 6<sup>th</sup> & Market Streets, (215) 965-2305, [nps.gov/inde](https://www.nps.gov/inde)

### 19<sup>th</sup> Century:

8. **Sarah Grimké (1792-1873) and (9.) Angelina Grimké Weld (1805-1879)** – Growing up on a plantation in Charleston, South Carolina, the Grimké sisters witnessed the cruel effects of slavery. In 1819, Sarah and her father visited Philadelphia, met members of the Society of Friends (Quakers) and experienced a city with a vibrant free Black community. By 1829, both Sarah and Angelina had become Quakers and moved to Philadelphia, where they joined abolitionist groups and spoke out against slavery in speeches, articles and letters. A speech Angelina gave in 1838 during the second Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women was among the factors that led protesters to destroy and burn Pennsylvania Hall, a center for abolitionists near 6<sup>th</sup> & Race Streets, just four days after it opened. At the time, society did not accept women as public speakers, especially on such a controversial topic as slavery. Undaunted, the sisters spent the rest of their lives standing for African-American and women’s rights, insisting everyone deserved a seat at the table. **Pennsylvania Hall Historical Marker**, near 6<sup>th</sup> & Race Streets; **Arch Street Meeting House**, 320 Arch Street, (215) 413-1804, [historicismh.org](http://historicismh.org)
10. **Lucretia Mott (1793-1880)** – Lifelong Quaker, distant cousin of **Benjamin Franklin** and Philadelphian by choice, Mott fervently advocated for abolition and women’s rights throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. When the Society of Friends began to divide—partly because of the religious group’s differing attitudes about slavery—Mott became a vocal and active minister leading the abolition movement, even refusing to purchase or use any products that were produced by enslaved labor. In the 1830s, she co-created the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society and helped organize a convention for abolitionists in Pennsylvania Hall near 6<sup>th</sup> and Race Streets. Mott served as a delegate to the 1840 World Anti-Slavery Convention in London. She also co-planned the Seneca Falls Woman’s Rights Convention in 1848, where she and others signed *The Declaration of Sentiments*, calling for basic civil rights for women. Mott lived to see the fulfillment of several of the *Declaration’s* demands, including the implementation of co-educational colleges such as Swarthmore College, which she helped establish. **Pennsylvania Hall Historical Marker**, near 6<sup>th</sup> & Race Streets; **Arch Street Meeting House**, 320 Arch Street, (215) 413-1804, [historicismh.org](http://historicismh.org); **Mother Bethel A.M.E.** (where Mott spoke from the pulpit), 419 S. 6<sup>th</sup> Street, (215) 925-0616, [motherbethel.org](http://motherbethel.org); Historic Fair Hill (cemetery where Mott is buried), 2901 Germantown Avenue, [historicfairhill.com](http://historicfairhill.com); Swarthmore College, 500 College Avenue, Swarthmore, (610) 328-8000, [swarthmore.edu](http://swarthmore.edu)

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11. **Sarah Mapps Douglass (1806-1882)** – Born to prominent African-American abolitionists—her father was **Robert Douglass**, a founder of Philadelphia’s first African Presbyterian Church; her mother, Quaker milliner and teacher, **Grace Bustill Douglass**—Mapps Douglass opened her own school for African-American children in her home and later worked as an administrator and teacher at the Institute for Colored Youth, which opened in 1837 at 7<sup>th</sup> and Lombard Streets and moved to Bainbridge Street in 1861. In 1833, Douglass and her mother helped found the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, an interracial organization. Sarah also helped found the Female Literary Association of Philadelphia, which encouraged education for young women of color; contributed to *The Liberator*, published by **William Lloyd Garrison**; and worked in the Women’s Pennsylvania Branch of the American Freedmen’s Aid Commission. She also studied anatomy, women’s health and hygiene, becoming the first African-American female student at the Female Medical College of Pennsylvania. She also attended Pennsylvania Medical University and was known for lectures on healthcare, which she also gave to African-American women during evening classes at the Banneker Institute. A close friend of the Grimké sisters (see above) Mapps Douglass created the earliest still-surviving signed paintings by an African-American woman artist. **Institute for Colored Youth Historical Marker**, 915 Bainbridge Street; **Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society Historical Marker**, 5<sup>th</sup> & Arch Streets; Banneker Institute Historical Marker, 409 S. 11<sup>th</sup> Street
12. **Ann Preston (1813-1872)** – This pioneer in the history of women physicians was born to a Quaker family in Chester County. Preston left boarding school to care for her younger siblings after their mother became ill, but later became a teacher. She became interested in women’s health and, as women were not permitted to attend medical schools, apprenticed with **Dr. Nathaniel Moseley**. Quakers founded the Female Medical College (later known as the Women’s Medical College of Pennsylvania, WMCP) in 1850, at 627 Arch Street. Preston was in the first graduating class and would go on to become a Professor of Hygiene and Physiology there. Preston helped found the Woman’s Hospital of Philadelphia on North College Avenue, which gave female medical students a clinic and provided care for women and children. At WMCP, Preston became the first female dean of any medical school and trained the first female African-American and Native American doctors. Female Medical College Historical Marker, 3300 Henry Avenue
13. **Jane Johnson (1814/1827-1872)** – Jane Johnson was an enslaved African-American who arrived in the port of Philadelphia with her captor John Hill Wheeler, members of his family and her two sons on July 18, 1855. Aided by abolitionists **William Still**, **Passmore Williamson** and five dockworkers, Johnson and her sons escaped enslavement while Wheeler looked on. This brave act was one of the first challenges to the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. Johnson’s rescue received national attention when Williamson was imprisoned and tried for it. Although hidden for safety, Johnson appeared at the trial as a witness for the defense, vehemently declaring her longstanding intention to escape enslavement. Williamson received a 90-day jail sentence that inspired international abolitionist activism. Johnson’s testimony helped acquit Still and two of the five dockworkers; the other three were fined \$10 and sentenced to a week’s imprisonment. **The Liberation of Jane Johnson Historical Marker**, Walnut Street & Columbus Boulevard
14. **Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906)** – Abolitionist, educational reformer, labor activist, suffragist, campaigner for women’s rights (and New Englander) Susan B. Anthony traveled throughout the country to advocate for her causes. Anthony founded the National Woman Suffrage Association with **Elizabeth Cady Stanton** and began planning a *Declaration of Rights of the Women of the United States* in 1875. The women intended to read the declaration at the centennial celebration at Independence Hall on July 4, 1876, but were denied permission.

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Instead, they bought tickets to the event and, after a celebratory reading of the *Declaration of Independence*, began distributing their own declaration to the audience while Anthony approached the stage and presented it to the presiding officer of the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition. **Independence Hall**, 6<sup>th</sup> & Chestnut Streets, (215) 965-2305, [nps.gov/inde](https://nps.gov/inde)

- 15. Rebecca Cole (1846-1922)** – The second female African-American physician in the United States and the first at the Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania (WMCP) studied first at the Institute for Colored Youth, later at WMCP under Ann Preston. After practicing medicine in New York and North Carolina, Cole returned to Philadelphia and opened the Women's Directory Center, which helped poor women and children obtain medical and legal services. Cole was an advocate for Philadelphia's African-American community. She was also a representative for the Ladies' Centennial Committee of Philadelphia, after refusing to serve on a race-based sub-committee, and helped plan the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Declaration of Independence*. **Institute for Colored Youth Historical Marker**, 915 Bainbridge Street; **Independence Hall**, 6<sup>th</sup> & Chestnut Streets, (215) 965-2305, [nps.gov/inde](https://nps.gov/inde)
- 16. Caroline LeCount (1846-1923)** – Born in Philadelphia to a cabinet and coffin maker and his wife, who likely had connections to the Underground Railroad, LeCount graduated first in her class from the Institute of Colored Youth, then at 716-18 Lombard Street. During the Civil War, LeCount supported African-American troops. She also became an activist for African-American children's education, teaching and becoming the principal of Cordelia Jennings' Ohio Street School, later renamed the Octavius V. Catto School for almost 50 years. Shortly after Philadelphia passed integrated streetcar legislation in 1867, LeCount was among the women activists who would try to board streetcars, and, denied, took legal action that helped enforce the new law. LeCount was engaged to Civil Rights leader **Octavius V. Catto** until he was assassinated in 1871 for registering African-Americans to vote. She never married. **Institute for Colored Youth Historical Marker**, 915 Bainbridge Street; Ohio Street School (three locations): 1022 South Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Street between Pine & Lombard Streets, 20<sup>th</sup> & Lombard Streets (as the Octavius V. Catto School)

## 20<sup>th</sup> Century:

- 17. Dolly Ottey (1892-1968)** – The beloved colonial cartway of Elfreth's Alley likely would have faced the wrecking ball if not for the efforts of Ottey. The businesswoman moved into 115 Elfreth's Alley in 1933 and immediately saw the value of preserving the nation's oldest residential block from destruction. She formed the Elfreth's Alley Association (EAA) in 1934 to preserve the Alley, working with the Philadelphia Society for the Preservation of Landmarks. Thanks to her efforts, the Alley achieved National Landmark status in 1966. **Elfreth's Alley**, between 2<sup>nd</sup> & Front Streets and Race & Arch Streets, (215) 574-0560, [elfrethsalley.org](https://elfrethsalley.org)
- 18. Frances Anne Wister (1874-1956)** – Born into a prominent Philadelphia family, Wister involved herself in many of upper society's clubs and organizations. She served as vice president of the Women's Civic Club of Philadelphia, an organization that helped bring electric street lighting to Philadelphia; Director of the Philadelphia Orchestra; member of the Philadelphia Board of Education and, in 1931, founder the Philadelphia Society for the Preservation of Landmarks, where, as the organization's president, she used her connections to help save and preserve both the Powel House and Elfreth's Alley. **Elfreth's Alley**, between 2<sup>nd</sup> & Front Streets and Race & Arch Streets, (215) 574-0560, [elfrethsalley.org](https://elfrethsalley.org); **Powel House**, 244 S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, (215) 925-2251, [philalandmarks.org](https://philalandmarks.org)

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**19. Barbara Gittings (1932-2007)** – A pioneer for LGBT rights, Gittings lived in Philadelphia and in the 1950s organized New York’s chapter of the Daughters of Bilitis, a lesbian civil rights organization, editing their newspaper, *The Ladder*. Working with fellow LGBT activist **Frank Kameny**, Gittings organized the first public demonstrations for LGBT rights—now referred to as the *Annual Reminders*—symbolically choosing Independence Hall, the birthplace of freedom. Together, they and a small group of activists picketed every July 4<sup>th</sup> from 1965-1969. In 1972, Gittings helped organize a panel in Philadelphia that helped move the American Psychiatric Association to drop the classification of homosexuality as a mental disorder. She also campaigned to get more LGBT information in libraries, for many years, heading the American Library Association’s Gay Task Force. The Independence Branch of the Philadelphia Free Library named its collection of LGBT books for Gittings. **Independence Hall**, 6<sup>th</sup> & Chestnut Streets, (215) 965-2305, [nps.gov/inde](https://nps.gov/inde); **Independence Library**, 18 S. 7<sup>th</sup> Street, (215) 685-1633, [libwww.freelibrary.org](http://libwww.freelibrary.org)

Philadelphia’s Historic District campaign, from VISIT PHILADELPHIA®, showcases the city’s incomparable place in early American history and the still vibrant neighborhoods of Old City, Society Hill and the Delaware River Waterfront. The campaign celebrates America’s most historic square mile in the country’s first World Heritage City, as designated by the Organization of World Heritage Cities. Funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania’s Department of Community and Economic Development and H.F. (Gerry) Lenfest, the initiative runs through September 2018.

Between Memorial Day and Labor Day weekends, visitors can engage with costumed history makers, hear stories of the real people of independence and take part in colonial reenactments. And every day of the year, they can tour, shop, dine and drink in the area just like the founding fathers and mothers once did. For more information about all there is to see and do in Philadelphia’s Historic District, go to [visitphilly.com](http://visitphilly.com) and [uwishunu.com](http://uwishunu.com).

*Note to Editors: For high-resolution photos of the Historic District, visit the photo gallery of [visitphilly.com/pressroom](http://visitphilly.com/pressroom).*

