

# Women's History Month

*Women's Education –  
Women's Empowerment*

# Women's History Month

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*...To ignore the vital role that women's dreams and accomplishments play in our own lives would be a great mistake. We draw strength and inspiration from those who came before us – and those remarkable women working among us today. They are part of our story, and a truly balanced and inclusive history recognizes how important women have always been in American society.*

—Virginia Woolf



Courtesy of the Virginia Woolf Society

# Women's History Month

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The stories of women's achievements are integral to the fabric of our history.

Women's tenacity, courage, and strength throughout the centuries is a remarkable source of inspiration.

As recently as the 1970s, women's history was close to an unknown topic in the school systems and general public consciousness.

# Women's History Month

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The Education Task Force in Sonoma County (California) Commission on the Status of Women initiated a "Women's History Week" celebration in 1978.

The week of March 8th, which is International Women's Day, was chosen as the central point of the observance.

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President Jimmy Carter issued a Presidential Proclamation declaring the week of March 8, 1980, as National Women's History Week.



Courtesy of the White House

# Women's History Month

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In the same year, Representative Barbara Mikulski and Senator Orrin Hatch sponsored a Congressional Resolution for National Women's History Week (NWHW) 1981.

By 1986, 14 states declared March as Women's History Month.

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As word spread, departments of education across the United States encouraged celebration and participation of NWHW as achieving equality goals in classrooms.

Within a few years, thousands of schools and communities celebrated NWHW.

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Each year, the dates of NWHW changed and a new lobbying effort was needed.

Thousands of individuals as well as educational and women's organizations spearheaded the national effort.



# Women's History Month

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Congress designated March as NWHM in perpetuity in 1987.

A Presidential Proclamation is issued every year honoring the extraordinary achievements of women.

Each year, National Women's History Month develops a unifying theme and honors women whose work and lives testify to that theme.

# Women's History Month

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Women now outnumber men in colleges nationwide.



The fight to learn was a fearless struggle waged by many determined women—across years and across cultures—in our country.

# Women's History Month

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M. Carey Thomas  
(1857 – 1935)



# Women's History Month

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## M. Carey Thomas

Thomas was born in Baltimore, Maryland. Growing up, she was strongly influenced by the feministic beliefs of her mother and her mother's sister.

Her father, a physician, was not completely in support of her views, but Thomas was fiercely independent and he supported her endeavors.

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## M. Carey Thomas

Thomas's education began in Baltimore, and then she transferred to Howland Institute. It was there that a teacher influenced her to study education, rather than medicine.

Her father, a trustee of John Hopkins University, was opposed to her plans of attending Cornell University to pursue an education degree. After much debate from Thomas, her father relented.

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M. Carey Thomas

After graduating from Cornell, she was allowed private tutoring in graduate work at John Hopkins University but withdrew because she was not permitted to attend class lectures.

She then went to the University of Leipzig for further graduate work but was forced to sit behind a screen during classes so her presence would not distract male students.

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M. Carey Thomas

She transferred to the University of Zurich and earned a Ph.D. in linguistics, a first for both women and Americans.

Thomas said she did not pursue her degree out of love of academics, but to prove to Americans that women had the same intellectual capabilities as men.

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## M. Carey Thomas

After Thomas graduated, she wrote to Bryn Mawr College and proposed that she be named president of the college.

The trustees declined and appointed her an English professor and dean. As dean, Thomas selected the faculty members, all of whom had Ph.D. degrees except for a young political scientist, Woodrow Wilson.



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M. Carey Thomas

In 1912, Bryn Mawr College became the first institution in the nation to offer a Ph.D. in social work when Thomas started the program.

She also ensured that John Hopkins University Medical School was open to women students on an equal basis with men.

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*“Women while in college ought to have the broadest possible education. This college education should be the same as men's, not only because there is but one best education, but because men's and women's effectiveness and happiness and the welfare of the generation to come after them will be vastly increased if their college education has given them the same intellectual training and the same scholarly and moral ideals.”*

— M. Carey Thomas

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Hallie Quinn Brown  
(1850 – 1949)



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## Hallie Quinn Brown

Born in Pennsylvania, Brown was one of six children of parents deeply committed to Black activist causes. During her childhood, her parents served as a station for the Underground Railroad.

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## Hallie Quinn Brown

Graduating from Wilberforce University, she began her teaching career in Mississippi, in a plantation school.

She was overwhelmed by the need for teachers to educate the vastly illiterate population of the region.

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## Hallie Quinn Brown

Working long hours in the classroom, she had a new school built to replace the one in disrepair and convinced the community to lengthen the school year from five to eight months.

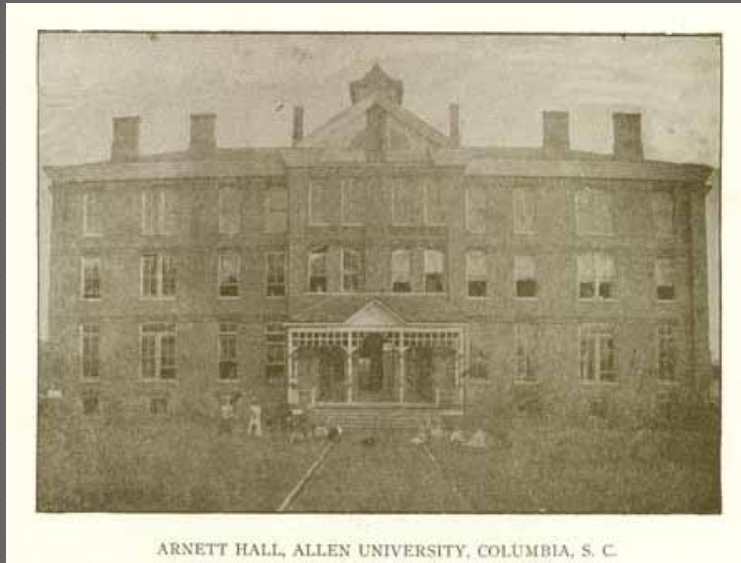
Brown gave speeches in small towns about the importance of education in the Black community, especially for women.

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## Hallie Quinn Brown

In 1885, she joined the faculty at Allen University. Brown taught at Allen and after two years served as Dean of the University.

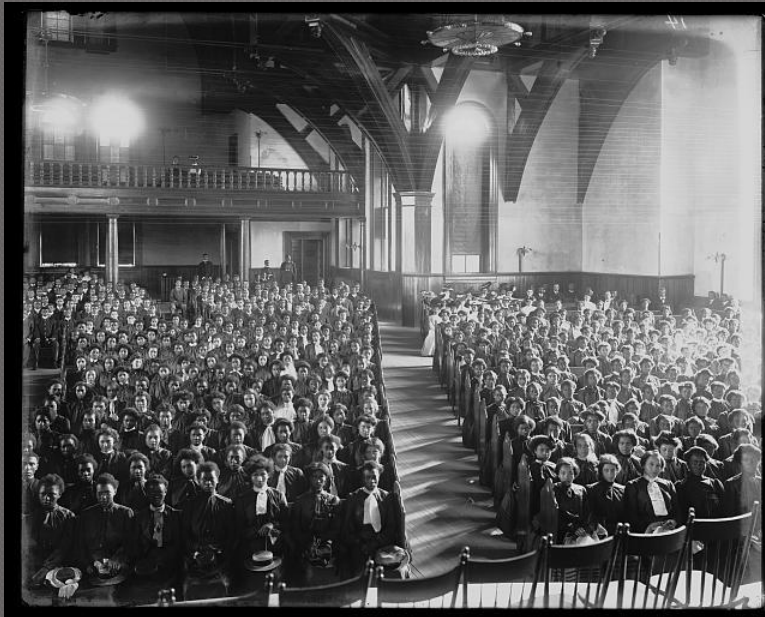


ARNETT HALL, ALLEN UNIVERSITY, COLUMBIA, S. C.

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## Hallie Quinn Brown



She taught public school in Ohio for four years, and then she was appointed Dean of Women at Tuskegee Institute, Alabama, working with Booker T. Washington.

Courtesy of the Library of Congress



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## Hallie Quinn Brown

Brown served as a professor of elocution at Wilberforce University. She helped promote the Colored Women's League, which later became part of the National Association of Colored Women.

She supported women's suffrage, education, and full citizenship for women as well as civil rights for Black Americans. She represented the United States at the International Congress of Women in 1899.

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Charlotte Angas Scott  
(1858 – 1931)



# Women's History Month

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## Charlotte Angas Scott

Growing up in a society that viewed a woman's place to be in the home, Scott sought equality for women and was considered to be a pioneer for advancement of women in the field of mathematics.

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## Charlotte Angas Scott

Scott was born in England and was raised in a family that advocated education for women. Her interest in mathematics was encouraged by her father.

She was awarded a scholarship in 1876 to Hitchin College, the first college in England to offer a post-secondary program to women.

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## Charlotte Angas Scott

Four years later, she competed in the final examinations at Cambridge University but she did so unofficially because the exams were offered exclusively to male students.

She ranked eighth in the exam, yet she was not allowed to attend the awards ceremony because she was a woman.

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## Charlotte Angas Scott

Scott then went on to graduate studies at the University of London while serving as a lecturer at Girton College.

In 1885, she moved to the United States to join the faculty of the newly-founded Bryn Mawr College, the first women's college offering graduate degrees. She viewed this appointment as an opportunity to open the door of education for women.

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## Charlotte Angas Scott

At Bryn Mawr, Scott promoted strict entrance policies, which were initiated in 1901.

Her efforts led to the creation of the College Entrance Examination Board. She was the first Chief Examiner of the Board, and policies she instituted in 1902 are still in effect today.

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## Charlotte Angas Scott

Additionally, she initiated undergraduate and graduate programs in mathematics at Bryn Mawr. She published numerous papers, authored one of the first mathematical research papers written in the U.S., and was active in several mathematical societies and organizations.

Scott's diligence and success opened the door for women to pursue careers in mathematics.



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Lucy Wheelock  
(1858 – 1931)



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## Lucy Wheelock

Wheelock believed children's early education for both males and females would improve society and devoted her life to *"the better education of those who are to shape it"* — kindergarten teachers.

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## Lucy Wheelock

Wheelock graduated from high school and taught for two years. In 1876, she enrolled in the Chauncy Hall School in Boston to prepare for college. Her discovery of the kindergarten program altered her plans.

She entered the Kindergarten Training School and after receiving her diploma, she became a kindergarten teacher at Chauncy Hall.

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## Lucy Wheelock

After kindergartens were introduced into the Boston public school system, Wheelock instituted a one-year training course for teachers. An incredible success, it began attracting students from all over the country.

In 1896, she left Chauncy Hall School to form the Wheelock Kindergarten Training School. Training for primary grades began in 1899, and training of nursery school teachers began in 1926.

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## Lucy Wheelock

The course was further lengthened to three years in 1929. Teachers were encouraged to view kindergarten as one building block in a larger process of socialization for the children in their classrooms.



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

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## Lucy Wheelock

Wheelock taught the most highly developed early education theories of the time and incorporated aspects of social work into the program.

She insisted her “*world changers*” have a strong sense of morals and civic responsibility. She sent her students into immigrant neighborhoods to learn by assisting mothers and families, as well as individual children.

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## Lucy Wheelock

Wheelock served on several national committees that worked toward standardization and recognition of kindergarten education and teacher training.

She worked on education issues with settlement houses, the League of Nations, and the National Education Association.

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*“The one thing that makes life worth living is to serve a cause, and the greatest cause that can be served is Childhood Education. From the first day of my kindergarten experience I dedicated my life to such service.”*

— Lucy Wheelock



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The 2010 U.S. Census Bureau report stated women sixteen and older represent 58.6 percent of the labor force.

Women's salaries remain disproportionate to men's. In 2010, the median annual earnings of women 15 or older who worked full time, in 2010 was \$36,931, with many women being on their own or their families' major income source.

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People with low literacy levels are at a particular disadvantage in increasing their income.

Education and training are proven strategies for raising incomes.

Graduating from high school increases working mothers' earnings by over \$1.60 per hour (over \$3,300 per year).

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In contrast, each year of work experience is worth only 10 cents per hour.

A woman with an associate's degree earns 34 percent more than a woman with a high school education, and a woman with a bachelor's degree earns 65 percent more than a woman with a high school education.

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This year, we embrace the 2012 Women's History Month theme "*Women's Education — Women's Empowerment*" and encourage the betterment of women through education, understanding the impact it has not only on women, but on our society as well.

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*“Education is the most powerful  
weapon which you can use to  
change the world.”*

—Nelson Mandela

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