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National  
Women's  
History  
Museum

NWHM

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Celebrating Our Past  
Inspiring Our Future

Spring 2006

## CELEBRATE THESE WOMEN BORN IN SPRING

**Sarah Kemble Knight** (April 19, 1866) was born in Boston, Massachusetts. She assumed control over the family business upon her father's death and as a result wrote what has been called one of the most authentic chronicles of colonial life in eighteenth-century America. Her book, *The Journal of Madame Knight*, developed from a journal she kept during a business trip between Boston and New York in October 1704. Along her voyage she documented her travels and adventures as well as her experiences with the food, lodgings, and customs of the people she met during her journey. Her work has remained a valuable and unique historical source. She died in 1727.



to receive the Cyrus B. Comstock Award from the U.S. National Academy of Sciences. She was a recipient of the Medal of Science, the nation's highest scientific award and became the first woman ever to be awarded an honorary doctorate from Princeton University. She died in 1997.

**Madeline Korbel Albright** (May 15, 1937) was born in Prague, Czechoslovakia. She and her family fled from the Nazi's in 1939 and she became a United States citizen in 1957. She earned a B.A. from Wellesley College, studied at the Johns Hopkins, and received her Masters and Ph.D. from Columbia University. Albright served as the United States' Representative to the United Nations and as a member of the National Security Council. Albright is most recognized as the 44th Secretary of State and the first woman to hold that office. During her term she became the highest ranking western diplomat to meet with North Korean leader Kim Jong Il. She currently serves as the

Mortara Distinguished Professor of Diplomacy at Georgetown University as well as the chair of the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs.

**Margaret Bourke-White** (June 14, 1904) was born in New York. She completed her undergraduate education at Cornell University in 1927 and was an original staff member of *Fortune* and *Life* magazines. She became



the first western photographer allowed to photograph inside the Soviet Union and covered the invasion of the Soviet Union by the German Army as well as the Italian Liberation. In 1945, she accompanied United States troops as they liberated Buchenwald

Concentration Camp. She covered Gandhi's campaign of non-violence in India and apartheid in South Africa. Since her death in 1971, her photographic works have been used by the United States Postal Service as postage stamps and her life as been portrayed on television and on the movie screen.

**Dr. Chien-Shiung Wu** "First Lady of Physics" (May 31, 1912) was born in Liu Ho, China. She graduated from the National Central University of Nanking in 1936, and received her Ph.D. from University of California, Berkeley in 1940. During World War II, Wu was asked to join the Manhattan Project to develop the atomic bomb. She developed a process to enrich uranium ore as fuel for the bomb. Wu was the first woman elected to the American Physical Society as well as the first woman

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A Different Point of View

## National Women's History Museum Site Campaign



NWHM Coalition Members and NWHM President at the Press Conference  
L to R: Erin Fuller, Deborah Fret, Susan Jollie, Robin Read, Lisa Maatz, Cheryl Cooper, Alma Morales Riqués

For Women's History Month in March, NWHM kicked off a grassroots, nationwide campaign urging the House of Representatives to enact legislation (S. 501), which has already received unanimous approval in the Senate. The bill is currently pending in the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. NWHM held a Press Conference to launch the campaign on March 2, 2006. Representatives from the National Organization Association, National Council of Negro Women, NAACP, A Latina Organization, American Association of University Women, Business and Professional Women/USA, National Association of Women Business Owners, National Foundation for Women Legislators, and the General Federation of Women's Clubs joined NWHM President Susan Jollie in calling on Congress to give the museum a prestigious home to properly honor women. The press and many NWHM coalition members in attendance viewed a moving call to action by NWHM spokesperson Actress Meryl Streep. The Press Conference generated press coverage in numerous newspapers across the country and internationally.



Actress Meryl Streep with NWHM President Susan Jollie

The six minute Streep DVD was delivered to the Congressional offices of the House of Representatives. Twenty-five radio spots featuring important American women in history were recorded by former CNN Anchor Mary Tillotson and aired on radio stations across the country during the month of March. (Both the film clip and radio spots are available for download off of the NWHM Web site, [www.nwhm.org](http://www.nwhm.org).) In addition to sending NWHM members letters addressed to Congress that they could sign and mail in, NWHM launched an on-line petition to Congress on the NWHM Web site, allowing people to quickly sign and send a letter electronically to their Representatives. This feature continues and we urge all NWHM members who have not yet signed a letter to Congress to please do so on-line! Better yet, make a point to tell your Representative that women deserve to be recognized in the National Women's History Museum.

## Lydia Estes Pinkham: Health Field Innovator of the 19th Century

LYDIA ESTES PINKHAM (1819-1883) was an innovator in the health field and hers was the first female name to be nationally recognized because of a product.

Lydia Estes lived her whole life in Massachusetts while it was on the cutting edge of social reform. With her family, she was active as a teenage in the earliest societies to ban slavery. She worked as a teacher until she married Isaac Pinkham at age 24 and then she bore and raised seven children. By the 1870's, the Pinkham family was close to poverty and in 1873, during the nation's most serious depression to date, their finances collapsed. As was the case with a number of other women, the hard economic times gave Lydia Pinkham, then in her mid-fifties, societal permission to use the business acumen that she clearly possessed.

For years she had experimented with herbal mixtures designed to improve health. This was not unusual at the time because nursing was not yet professionalized and all women were considered to be in charge of family health. Pinkham's vegetable compound proved exceptionally popular among her friends. They credited it with easing the "female complaints" that they were embarrassed to explain to physicians.

When the family went bankrupt in 1875, Pinkham began to sell her compound. Turning her home into a factory, she ran production in the basement. Her daughter and her oldest son provided the capital for bottling materials, while her two other sons became the sales department. Her husband, traumatized after his arrest for debt, took



## Lydia Estes Pinkham

Continued from page 1...

to his sickbed and had no part in the business.

Advertising greatly improved the business. In 1876, Pinkham discovered that newspaper advertising reached more people faster than door-to-door sales. Three years later, in 1879, Lydia Pinkham posed for a photograph to be used in advertisements, showing her to be the perfect picture of mature health. Adding her image to ads immediately made an astonishing difference in sales. Less than a year later, the Pinkhams turned down a \$100,000 offer for their trademark.

The grandmotherly image also served to soften Pinkham's uncommonly candid references to gynecological problems, and she became adept at writing ad copy. She soon added a "Department of Advice" and began responding to hundreds of poignant letters from women who were absolutely ignorant of how their bodies functioned. Beyond her medication, she also prescribed cleanliness, a balanced diet, rest, and other basics of modern health that were not necessarily followed in the nineteenth century. Her first principle was the ancient one of "first, do no harm" - a maxim widely ignored by most of the era's physicians, who prescribed harsh chemicals, including poisonous mercury and lead, and performed rough surgery in septic surroundings. Her compound was based on five innocuous but relatively rare herbs and roots - which were preserved in a solution of 19% alcohol. Although stronger than wine or beer, when taken in the small doses prescribed, the formula was not nearly strong enough to cause drunkenness.

Pinkham's notebooks were full of other pharmacological compounds to solve other problems, and she was beginning to think of launching an expanded line of products when two of her sons developed tuberculosis. The cause and cure of that disease would not be known for many decades, and with great anxiety, she watched them both weaken and die in 1881. The following year she suffered a paralyzing stroke and died the following spring, at age 64. Her surviving daughter and son continued to be successful with their mother's famous product and the company reached a sales peak of \$3 million in 1925.

Had she lived longer, she probably could have founded a great pharmaceutical corporation; she certainly demonstrated that possibility during a business career of less than a decade. In an era when female enterprise was rare, Lydia Pinkham not only created an innovative product and sold it with creative advertising, she also educated women on the fundamentals of physiology. Although scorned by organized medicine, her holistic philosophy predated by a century the "wellness" campaigns of our time.



## Letter from our President



This issue of *A Different Point of View* illustrates a fundamental truth about how women go about making history. At a time in the 1820's when women were unable to vote, they were not silent. They

made their political views known by sending petitions to Congress on the most difficult and controversial issues of the day. These women were far from equal participants in the political process, but they were determined to be heard. Almost two hundred years later, women have improved their legal position, but only after a long struggle.

This reality is best illustrated by the failure of the House of Representatives to pass legislation authorizing NWHM to turn a vacant building into a place of learning that honors women's roles in building America. So we turn again to the time honored methods with a campaign petitioning Congress to act. The methods we have used reflect our times - a video appeal narrated by Meryl Streep, a woman of great vision and persuasive skills - and an electronic letter writing campaign prepared by the Internet.

NWHM is joined by a large number of supportive organizations. Coalition member organizations have publicized our legislative campaign in newsletters, disseminated the online letters to Congress to their membership on their websites and through electronic bulletins, included passages of S. 501 in their legislative agendas and Capitol Hill lobbying days, and generated e-mail campaigns.

I am heartened by the lessons of history teaching us that although it may take time, women's visions of how society should evolve frequently prevail and ultimately benefit all of us. I just wish it would take less time! But I know the members of NWHM will stick with this effort because that is how women change America.

Best regards,

Susan B. Jollie  
President



In honor of Mother's Day, the National Women's History Museum enables you to remember and thank all of the women who have helped to shape our life. It may be your mother, grandmother, aunt, sister, teacher, friend, or neighbor. If you are interested in honoring someone, please visit [www.nwhm.org](http://www.nwhm.org) to make a donation of \$25 or more for each special woman.

Upon receipt of your donation and the name(s) of those you are honoring, their name(s) will be listed on the Roll of Honor and Remembrance on our Web site. When the Museum is opened, this Roll of Honor and Remembrance will be permanently displayed there for all to see.

### NWHM Co-Sponsored Two Women's History Events at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

On April 17 and 19, the National Women's History Museum co-sponsored women's history lectures at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C.

On April 17, panelists Elisabeth Israels Perry, Phyllis M. Palmer, and Kriste Lindenmeyer discussed *An American Girl and Her Four Years at a Boys College*, a semi-fictional account written by Olive San Louie Anderson in the late 19th century. The book chronicles the early days of co-education as experienced by the novel's heroine Wilhemine "Will" Elliot at Ortonville College. The book parallels the real life experience of Anderson at the University of Michigan during the 1870's. Perry, who is co-editor of the re-released novel, presented a brief synopsis of the book to the audience as well as her historical interpretation of Anderson's work. Palmer, an American Studies scholar, discussed the novel within its cultural context. Lindenmeyer, a history professor at the University of Maryland-Baltimore County, discussed the changes in post-Reconstruction America and how they impacted the novel.

On April 19, authors Alisse Portnoy and Louise Knight discussed their new books and were joined by commentators Nancy Inberg and Elisabeth Perry, who provided additional insight into the historical topics. Portnoy's book, *Their Right to Speak: Women's Activism in the Indian and Slave Debates*, discussed how women in the early 19th century used family, home, virtue, and faith to argue against forcibly removing Native Americans from southern states in the 1820's and soon after for the abolishment of slavery. A basis for Portnoy's book were 1,500 petitions to Congress she found in the National Archives from women in the 1820's, asking that Native Americans not be removed. This was the first widespread action taken by any group of people in the U.S. to petition Congress. Knight's book, *Citizen: Jane Addams and the Struggle for Democracy*, is a biography focused on the first 40 years of Addams' life, particularly the events, people, books, and philosophies that inspired her to leave middle-class comfort and open the Hull House in Chicago and go on to become a national and then international activist for peace, justice, and equality.

The panelists' and commentators' discussions generated numerous questions from the post lecture reception sponsored by NWHM offered all an opportunity to pursue the dialogue in an informal setting. The events left attendees with a better understanding of ways in which women's history is essential to achieving a complete and accurate interpretation of history.

### NWHM Special Thanks

to the family and friends of Dr. Letty Prior who donated over \$1,000 to the museum in her memory. Among her many accomplishments, Dr. Prior served as the Director of the Women's Center at the University of Maine at Farmington, where she was instrumental in laying the groundwork for a Women's Studies major and creating the Nordic Celebration of Women and the Women's History Month Banquet.

### NWHM Web Site Updates

Visit the NWHM Web site ([www.nwhm.org](http://www.nwhm.org)) to view several new resources. These resources include:

\*A cyber exhibition, *Women in Industry*, which examines women's contributions to the workplace and economy and their activism for better working conditions between the years 1800 and 1945.

\*An educational section that has items like lesson plans for teachers of all grade levels, biographies of American women who have made important contributions to society, and a suffrage quiz and timeline.

\*A self-guided tour of historical sites relating to women's involvement in the abolition movement in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C.

\*An events calendar page, which provides information about women's history-related events throughout the country, categorized by state.

\*A building site legislation page that provides background information about the NWHM campaign, including the text of the Senate Bill and pictures that demonstrate how this vacant building is being wasted.

### Membership Updates

If your name is misspelled or you receive multiple copies of the newsletter, please contact us at: P.O. Box 1296, Annandale, VA 22003

Or you can e-mail us at [staff@nwhm.org](mailto:staff@nwhm.org). Please type Membership Update in the subject line.

ON JULY 13 2006,

THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY MUSEUM HOSTS AN EVENING AT THE KENNEDY CENTER IN WASHINGTON, DC FOR A PERFORMANCE OF THE BROADWAY MUSICAL



MAUREEN MCCORMICK  
**LITTLE WOMEN**  
THE MUSICAL

ENJOY A RECEPTION BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE AT 600 RESTAURANT AT THE WATERGATE, 600 NEW HAMPSHIRE AVE., NW. TICKETS COST \$100. TO BUY TICKETS OR FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL 703.813.6209 OR E-MAIL [INFO@NWHM.ORG](mailto:INFO@NWHM.ORG)