



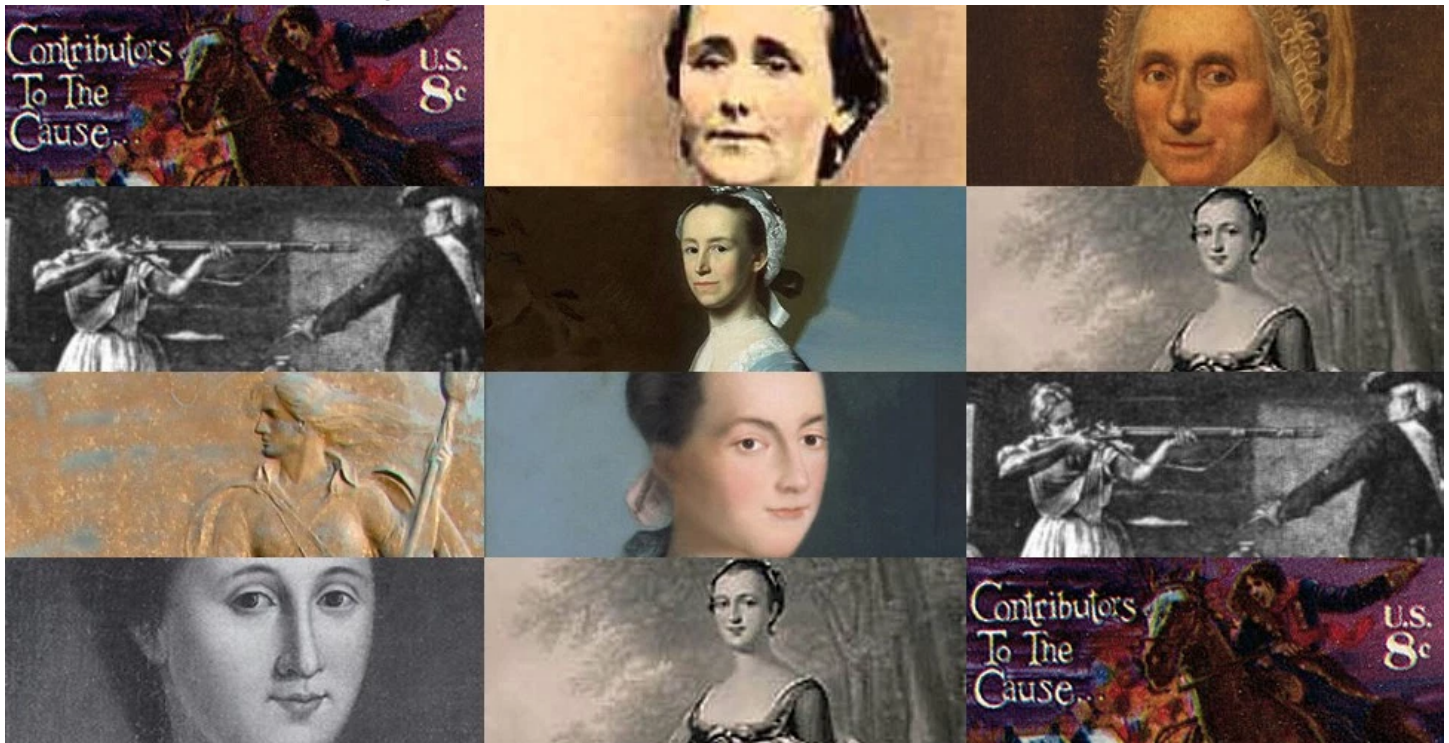
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10 AMAZING WOMEN OF THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR

by Pamela Murrow(<https://allthingsliberty.com/author/pamela-murrow/>)



“I desire you would remember the ladies”

March 31, 1776, Abigail Adams(<http://www.history.com/topics/abigail-adams>) to her husband, John

■ Adams(<http://www.history.com/topics/john-adams>)

After reading the “Most Overrated Revolutionary(<http://allthingsliberty.com/2013/10/overrated-revolutionary/>)” and the “Most Underrated Revolutionary(<http://allthingsliberty.com/2013/10/underrated-revolutionary/>)”

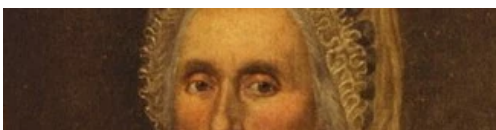
revolutionary),” and the amazing contributions by each and every person, it started me thinking about “the ladies” that I feel, in their own ways, helped achieve independence. The impact that ladies had on the revolutionary effort did not take center stage and has been underrated. The involvement of some of these women has not been as recognizable as others but they all had one thing in common, patriotic passion. These women were steadfast, dependable and assisted in every way imaginable, many even risking their own lives and fearing for their personal safety.

Even though society did not easily permit females to participate in the Revolutionary War, women did great things by giving to their country in many different ways. So their husbands did not have to manage homesteads, these ladies supported them by working farms, managing the Indians /Redcoats /frontier environment and caring for the sick so their families could stay together while their husbands were either fighting, creating or rallying the nation. These Patriots endured hardships only they could understand. John Adams wished to be a soldier, and expressed his desire that “every body must and will, and shall be a soldier”[1] but was much more successful in congress while his wife ran the farm. Many times women uprooted families to follow their husbands or left their children behind to be raised by friends and family, enduring the unwritten history of living life, the day in and day out hardships of survival. The women and children that followed endured the same living conditions and suffered the same privations as the soldiers in an army, which sometimes included a lack of food, clothing and shelter.[2]



The written history of the most underrated revolution was generally written by men, about men. Words are the only record that historians recognize. Even though these women were raising money through female-run organizations, refusing to buy British made products and even spying, too often the souls and passions of women went unrecorded. Their selfless actions allowed their men to take up arms and create a new nation.

Although there are too many women to list who contributed to the struggle for freedom and are not recognized, here are my ten picks listed in no particular order.





(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_Ball_Washington)

1. Mary Ball Washington //

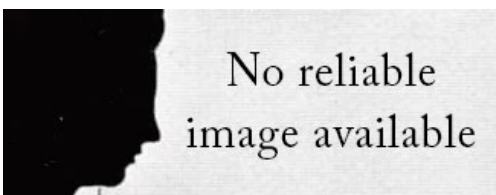
This is a woman that I personally feel has been forgotten. Granted, her only claim to fame is being George Washington's mother and, at times, the relationship was known to be a little strained. But, **Mary Washington**(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_Ball_Washington) was widowed at the young age of thirty-five and left with five children to raise. George was eleven years old when his father died, allowing his mother's demands to shape his character. Mrs. Washington was strong-willed and ruled her house with sternness and common sense and taught her son to be a man of honor and principle. It was this way of thinking which formed her son's personality to lead by example. Although not much has been written about Mary, history has shown that she had a deep and profound influence on the life of the first President of the United States and, for this, Mary should be properly remembered.



(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martha_Washington)

2. Martha Custis Washington//

Martha Custis Washington(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martha_Custis_Washington) belongs to the club, which I like to call, "*Ladies Who Are Not Well Known In Their Own Right*" and is remembered more for who she married. As the men were chanting at Valley Forge, "*No bread, no soldier*", Martha Washington arrived on the scene with supplies from Mount Vernon. She set up a sewing circle of officers' wives, including Kitty Greene and Lucy Knox, who both left their children at home and joined their husbands. She traveled every year to winter quarters with her husband.[3] She emerged as a selfless, courageous and patriotic American. Mrs. Washington became indispensable as a nurse and comfort to Washington and his men. One witness to Martha's activities later wrote: "I never in my life knew a woman so busy from early morning until late at night as was Lady Washington, providing comforts for the sick soldiers." [4]



3. Lucy Flucker Knox //

Lucy Flucker Knox(<http://www.americanrevolution.org/women/women7.html>) was also known by the soldiers as Lady Knox. Although Lucy was, at times, thought to be aloof, she was kind and generous, never

hesitating to share her and Henry's food with starving men and giving aid to the sick and injured. Lucy gave up her entire Loyalist family, never to see them again, to marry the man she had loved since she was just fourteen years old.

To support Henry when the Continental Army encamped at Valley Forge for the bitter winter, Lucy arrived along with other officers' wives. General Knox and his wife were living in a large stone house beside the artillery park, and along with Martha Washington and Kitty Greene, Lucy became a supportive and caring hostess to cold, ragged and hungry officers.

During the Revolution, most officers had homes for their wives to return to after following their husbands from camp to camp. Not Lucy and Henry Knox; they did not have a permanent home until they had been married for over 20 years. They gave numerous years to fighting for freedom and helping to create this new country.

What Lucy Knox gave should certainly be remembered.



(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abigail_Adams)

4. Abigail Adams //

Although John Adams could be cranky and ill-tempered, just think how grumpy he would have been without the support of his wife of fifty-four years, his "*Portia*".[5]

In 1775, along with Mercy Warren and the governor's wife, Hannah Winthrop, **Abigail**(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abigail_Adams) was appointed by the Massachusetts Colony General Court to question fellow Massachusetts women who were charged by either their word or action of remaining loyal to the British crown and working against the independence movement. John wrote to Abigail "...you are now a politician and now elected into important office, that of judges of Tory ladies..."[6]

As the Second Continental Congress was formed and debated the Declaration of Independence, Abigail began the argument in her letters to her husband that creation of a new form of government was a chance to make the legal status of women equal to that of men.

Abigail remained in Braintree managing the farm and household and raising their children. Although women at that time did not normally handle business affairs, Abigail traded livestock, hired help, bought land, oversaw construction, and supervised the planting and harvesting, allowing her husband to become the statesman and leading advocate of American independence. "I hope in time to have the reputation of being as good a Farmess as my partner has of being a good Statesman," she once wrote. [7]

Throughout his career, Abigail had served as unofficial advisor to John. Their letters show him seeking her counsel on many issues, including his presidential aspirations.[8]

Thankfully, their extensive correspondence has allowed us to know what an extraordinary woman Abigail Adams was.



(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mercy_Otis_Warren)

5. Mercy Otis Warren //

"America stands armed with resolution and virtue, but she still recoils at the idea of drawing the sword against the nation from whence she derived her origin."

-December 29, 1774, Mercy Otis Warren

Known as the "Conscience of the American Revolution," **Mercy Otis Warren**(<http://www.revolutionary-war.net/mercy-otis-warren.html>) accomplished things unknown to women in her time. She was a prolific and influential writer and the first woman playwright. She was a woman who spoke her opinions by writing them down. Her writings contained her beliefs, thoughts and opinions about wars and political issues and she sympathized with the call for revolution, composing political poetry.[9]

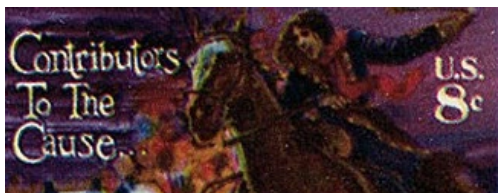
There are many women who definitely had a significant role in the formation of this country during the Revolution when formal politics did not include women. Early on, Mercy Otis Warren, while recognizing social differences between men and women, also knew that the minds of both genders could be equally valuable. To this end she realized that women needed education as much as men and pushed for schools to be established for women and girls. Although not a feminist in contemporary terms, she was unique in her time, writing and working for equal respect and equal rights for women, regardless of station in life.



(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kate_Barry)

6. Catherine Moore Barry //

Known as the “Heroine of the Battle of Cowpens”, Catherine (Kate) Barry volunteered as a scout for the American forces. Familiar with every trail and shortcut around her plantation in South Carolina and being an excellent horsewoman, Kate was crucial in warning the militia of the approaching British. The Battle of Cowpens took place on January 17, 1781. Before the battle, Kate was instrumental in rounding up militia, including her husband Captain Andrew Barry, to support General Daniel Morgan and his troops. Thanks to the bravery of women like Catherine Barry, the Battle of Cowpens was a decisive victory by Continental army forces in the Southern campaign of the American Revolutionary War.



(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sybil_Ludington)

7. Sybil Ludington //

Sybil Ludington(<http://www.historicpatterson.org/Exhibits/ExhSybilLudington.php>) has been celebrated as the female Paul Revere because of her ride through Putnam and Dutchess Counties to warn the militia that British troops were burning Danbury, Connecticut.[10]

In addition, Sybil's father, Colonel Henry Ludington, was a commander in the 7th Regiment of the Dutchess County Militia. After arriving in Connecticut on April 25, 1777, British General Tryon and his forces set about selectively burning down homes and stores in Danbury. While destroying the properties, the British discovered several hundred cases of wine and rum.

After consuming more rum than they ought to and lacking military discipline, the drunken soldiers cruelly set about igniting more fires.

A messenger was dispatched to Colonel Ludington with the news of the attack, reaching the Ludington home exhausted and unfamiliar with the area. It isn't clear whether she was asked or volunteered, but Sybil set out on what has become her famous ride to alert the militia. Sixteen-year-old Sybil traveled 40 miles from her home, steering clear of British soldiers and Loyalists before returning home the next day.



(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nancy_Hart)

8. Nancy Hart //

Here is a woman known to have a hot temper, fearless spirit and no hesitation to deliver revenge if she felt herself or any member of her family had been harmed.

The most well-known account of **Nancy's**(<http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/nancy-hart-ca-1735-1830>) life begins when six British soldiers stopped at her cabin in search of a Whig leader, demanding information if he had stopped at her farm. Although the man they were tracking had been there, she denied seeing anyone.

Convinced that she was lying, one of the Tories shot and killed Hart's prized gobbler, ordering her to cook the bird. Entering the cabin, they stacked their weapons in a corner and demanded something to drink. Hart obliged them by serving up wine. As the soldiers drank the wine, Hart sent her daughter to the spring for a bucket of water. She secretly instructed her daughter to blow a conch shell, kept in a nearby stump, to alert the neighbors that Tories were in the cabin.

As Hart served her unwelcome visitors and passed between them and their weapons, she began to pass the muskets through an opening in the cabin wall to her daughter, who had slipped outside to the rear of the house. When the soldiers noticed what was going on, they rushed to try and retrieve what weapons were left. She gave them one warning that she would shoot the next man that moved. Ignoring her warning, one man made the deadly mistake of approaching her. She held the rest off until her husband, Benjamin, and others arrived.

Benjamin Hart wanted to shoot the remaining hostages, but she insisted on hanging them.

In 1912 workmen grading a railroad near the site of the old Hart cabin unearthed a neat row of six skeletons that lay under nearly three feet of earth and were estimated to have been buried for at least a century.[11]



(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esther_de_Berdt)

9. Esther DeBerdt Reed //

Esther DeBerdt Reed(<http://www.nwhm.org/education-resources/biography/biographies/esther-de-berdt-reed/>)

was born in London, met American Joseph Reed and they were married on May 31, 1770, eventually moving to Philadelphia.

As the Revolution progressed, Esther became disenchanted with her homeland and began to support the American cause. To show her patriotism, Esther established "*The Ladies of Philadelphia*". The organization raised an enormous sum of \$300,000 dollars for the troops by going door to door asking for donations.

Esther suggested to General Washington that the money be divided up and given to the soldiers.

Although Washington was more than appreciative for the gift, he felt it would do more good if it was used for clothing. The women of *The Ladies of Philadelphia* bought linen, sewing shirts for the American troops.



(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Margaret_Corbin)

10. Margaret Cochran Corbin //

Margaret Cochran Corbin(<http://www.distinguishedwomen.com/biographies/corbin.html>) was one of the wives who, during the Revolution, were tagged as “Camp Followers.” These women followed their husbands, cooking, washing laundry and doing whatever domestic chores needed to be done.

On November 16, 1776, while they were stationed in Fort Mifflin, the fort was attacked by British and Hessian troops. Margaret’s husband, John, was assisting a gunner who was ultimately killed during the battle. John then took over as gunner until he was killed. Margaret, known as Captain Molly, had no time to mourn and continued firing the cannon alone until she was wounded, severely injuring her shoulder and chest and mangling her jaw. She never fully recovered from the wounds and was left without the use of her left arm for the rest of her life.[12]

[1] Edith B. Gelles, *Abigail & John – Portrait of a Marriage* (New York: Harper Collins, 2009), 57.

[2] Todd Andrlik, *Reporting the Revolutionary War* (Naperville, Illinois: Sourcebooks, Inc., 2012), 234.

[3] Joseph E. Fields, *Worthy Partner – The Papers of Martha Washington* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1994), xxii.

[4] Cokie Roberts, *Founding Mothers* (New York: Harper Collins, 2004), 94.

[5] Edith B. Gelles, *Abigail & John*, 57.

[6] The National First Ladies Library, “*First Lady Biography: Abigail Adams*,” (accessed October 2,

2013, [http://www.firstladies.org/biographies/firstladies.aspx?](http://www.firstladies.org/biographies/firstladies.aspx?biography=2)

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[7] Encyclopedia of World Biography, “*Abigail Adams Biography*,” accessed September 28, 2013

<http://www.notablebiographies.com/A-An/Adams-Abigail.html>(<http://www.notablebiographies.com/A-An/Adams-Abigail.html>).

[8] Bio – The True Story – A&E Network – 2013, “*Abigail Adams Biography*,” accessed October 2,

2013, <http://www.biography.com/people/abigail-adams-9175670>(<http://www.biography.com/people/abigail-adams-9175670>).

[9] Pamela Kline and Paul Pavao, “*Mercy Otis Warren*,” 2010-1013, accessed October 7, 2013,

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[10] *Historical Dictionary*, New York: 2012, accessed October 4, 2013.

[10] Historic Patterson, New York - 2012, accessed October 4, 2013,

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[11] History and Archaeology, Revolution and Early Republic, 1775-1800, original entry by Clay Ouzts, Gainesville College, 8/12/2005, last modified 8/28/2013, "Nancy Hart (ca. 1775-1830)"

accessed September 27, 2013, <http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/nancy-hart-ca-1735-1830>(<http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/nancy-hart-ca-1735-1830>)

[12] Danuta Bois, "Distinguished Women of Past and Present - Margaret Chochran Corbin", 1997, accessed October 8, 2013


<http://www.distinguishedwomen.com/biographies/corbin.html>(<http://www.distinguishedwomen.com/biographies/corbin.html>).

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