



A TIMELINE OF THE WOMEN
WHO CHANGED AMERICA



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Women Architects

What do the Hearst Castle in California and many of the buildings in Grand Canyon National Park have in common? They were designed by women architects! In this month's newsletter, we feature two early women architects - Julia Morgan and Mary Colter.

California's first licensed woman architect, Julia Morgan, studied architecture in Paris. After failing the entrance examination to the École des Beaux-Arts twice, she learned that the faculty had failed her deliberately to discourage her admission. Undeterred, she gained admission and received her certificate in architecture in 1902. By 1904, she had opened her own architecture practice in San Francisco. After receiving acclaim when one of her buildings on the Mills College campus withstood the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, she was commissioned to rebuild the damaged Fairmont Hotel. With this project Morgan's reputation as well as her architecture practice was assured.



Julia Morgan

Morgan designed her first building for the YWCA in Oakland in 1912. She then began work on the YWCA's seaside retreat Asilomar, near Monterey, which has hosted thousands of visitors since its founding in 1913. Today Asilomar is a state historical park. Morgan's work on the Hearst Castle, which is also now a state historical monument, cemented her reputation. The Castle, located at San Simeon, has attracted



Lookout Studio

Architect Mary Colter was asked by railroad magnate Fred Harvey to design hotels and restaurants along the Santa Fe Railway route, with the objective of bringing tourists to the southwestern United States. Harvey asked Colter to serve as the chief architect, which was quite an unusual request at that time. In 1905, Colter designed the Hopi House on the south rim of the Grand Canyon. Her design of the Bright Angel Lodge, also on the south rim of the Grand Canyon, in 1935 led to an architectural genre referred to as "National Park Service Rustic." This genre uses materials native to the site location; it also focuses on large-scale design elements. Many of Colter's buildings are now designated as National Historic Landmarks.

Colter's architectural practice was quite varied; she designed hotels, train stations, shops, restaurants, and other tourist enticements. She used Native American and Hispanic history and art as well as the southwestern landscape promoted by her employer. In many instances the local Hopi, Zuni, Navajo, and Mexican motifs she utilized were introduced to the American travelling public for the first time. The Mimbreno China she designed for the Super Chief, one of the passenger trains and the flagship of the Santa Fe Railroad, was based on the pottery of the Mimbres tribe of New Mexico. Today, the original china pieces are collectibles and reproductions are available for sale.

Architecture, as a discipline, is a combination of math, engineering and art-all with the underpinning of vision. Let's encourage girls to consider this most intriguing and important field of endeavor.

Her Story: A Timeline of the Women Who Changed America

www.herstoryatimeline.com

8547 E. Arapahoe Rd, PMB J189
Greenwood Village, Colorado 80112



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