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E-Newsletter | November 2010

Early Women Writers & Journalists

Women breaking barriers in the 18th and 19th centuries

It will come as no surprise to readers of our monthly Her Story newsletter that many women have made contributions to changing America by their participation in the fields of writing and journalism. We highlight a diarist, a playwright, a non-fiction author and an editor of a monthly magazine. All of these occupations were considered highly unusual ones for women in the 18th and 19th centuries. The women are some of the early role models on whose shoulders we all stand. The women we are featuring are among the less "famous" of the over 850 women profiled in our book--*Her Story: A Timeline of the Women Who Changed America*.

As early as 1704, a diary is kept of her travels. Sarah Kemble Knight takes a trip from Boston to New York and back, a trip that in those days was not just as straightforward as taking the shuttle, the train or driving. It was a long and arduous experience and one which, generally speaking, women of that time did not usually undertake. Knight keeps a diary of her travels. When the diary is published in 1825, it is acclaimed for its depiction of Knight's encounters with the people and places of the time.



Mercy Otis Wa

In 1773, Mercy Otis Warren advocated for national independence from royal tyranny in her satirical play The Adulateur, which was published in a Boston newspaper. She subsequently corresponded with Abigail Adams, who later became First Lady. In her correspondence with Adams, Warren expressed her opinion that women did not participate in all matters of life not because of their lack of ability but primarily because of the lack of suitable education and opportunity for them to pursue their talents. Are you aware of the fact that at that time in our country's history, only approximately 40% of

> white women could read and no public education system had been established?



Lydia Maria Child

In 1833, Lydia Maria Child publishes her first antislavery book, An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans. She is already a prominent writer. One of her books, The Frugal Housewife, goes through at least thirtyfive printings between 1829 and 1850. She is best remembered for her Thanksgiving poem, Over the River and Through the Woods.

The final of the women we are highlighting in this issue is **Sarah Josepha Hale.** In 1837 she is selected to be the editor of a new monthly magazine, Godey's Lady's Book. Hale

husband. For forty years (until she is ninety years old!), she will fight for greater educational opportunities for women through the magazine's editorial columns.

Writing is a superb way to share your thoughts and feeling with othersto promote a point of view-to persuade-to recommend-to influence. The amazing women we noted were all writers who used their skills to advocate for greater rights and opportunities for all women.



Godey's Lady's Book

Next Month: Women as Humanitarians

Her Story: A Timeline of the Women Who Changed America www.herstoryatimeline.com

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