

Southern New Hampshire University

Revolutionary Women

Notable Revolutionary Era Women Deserving of a Commemorative Postage Stamp

A Capstone Project Submitted to the College of Online and Continuing Education in Partial
Fulfillment of the Master of Arts in History

By

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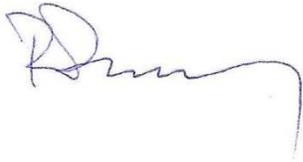
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A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'R. D. ...', written over a horizontal line.

November 12, 2017

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Abstract

Revolution is a term globally recognized. Throughout Earth's history, there have been countless social endeavors classified as revolutions. Some revolutions result in social justice, some result in the birth of a nation; on the eve of the 19th century in North America, a revolution of the latter took place. The American Revolution gave way to the formation of a new nation and a history of the United States of America began. In American and much of world history, many of the details are dominated with male driven successes, stories of male heroes, and a presidential history of all male leaders.

The revolutionary war and its history has been studied and taught for over two hundred years and during these two hundred plus years, the narrative has narrowed in on men, The Founding Fathers. However, any narrowing of information is damaging to the character of the entire era. It is for this reason, one should ask *were all the founders fathers; or were some of those that made an impact on the revolution mothers and daughters too?*

Although abundantly studied in academics, a public involvement in the study and commemoration of female revolutionaries is a pioneer endeavor. One of the most commemorative actions the nation can take is putting remarkable women on postage stamp that can be seen and used across the United States. The Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee (CSAC) was formed with the expectation impactful people, places, and things may be commemorated as the nation should see fit. Through evidence and ideas, it is evident that a stamp set about revolutionary era women is a serious contender for become the next major collectable commemorative set.

Dedication

This work is dedicated to all the women during the Revolutionary Era known and unknown to me who submitted without complaint to the trials of war with quiet heroism. It is also dedicated to the women who have been a personal inspiration to me, especially my mother who in her own way is a quiet hero too.

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Preface

Nestled in between the trees of the Michaux State Forest in Central Pennsylvania lies an old Blacksmith Shop. On the south facing wall is a sign that reads, "Thaddeus Stevens Blacksmith Shop". Hundreds of visitors every summer walk in the dusty doors of the shop wondering what Thaddeus Stevens had to do with blacksmithing; the answer that all visitors get and surprises many is "not much." Thaddeus Stevens was, of course, a politician and known abolitionist. His blacksmith shop was merely a financial endeavor and the lasting impact and lure of this little shop is the history and antique blacksmith tools.

It was in volunteering at this shop that I had the privilege of meeting Ross Hetrick, president of the Thaddeus Stevens Society. He runs the shop, provides historical insight, and establishes a volunteer schedule. I was a volunteer at the shop over the summer of 2017 and on my first day, Mr. Hetrick explained to me, in passing, the efforts he was making in getting Thaddeus Stevens on a commemorative stamp. His announcement was brief and fleeting but I carried the idea with me for hours and days following our encounter.

I researched the process in suggesting a stamp and decided that not just one man should be commemorated, but a complete set of ... women. The idea to create a stamp set of women started off, as many ideas do, with a preliminary list and further developed, with the guidance of the CSAC rules and regulations, into the list presented in this work. I wish the Thaddeus Stevens society all the luck in getting their stamp through the process and thank Mr. Hetrick for the unexpected inspiration.

Acknowledgments

For designing all the portraits and the visual representation of the stamp set, I would like to thank my husband, Benjamin T. Fake. I would like to acknowledge his talent and his loving patience during this process. His artwork embodies the colorful stories of the revolutionary women.

I would also like to acknowledge the students and peers at Southern New Hampshire University who made the peer review process enjoyable and rewarding.

Finally, acknowledgement of all the women who participated in the Women's March on DC in January 2017 is paramount. Without their inspiration and strength, the discussion on women's rights, women's history, and overall social equality would not be as central of a topic to political discussion as it is today.

Introduction

The United States Postal Service is a government entity that reaches every corner of the United States. The broad nature of this government agency makes it an ideal platform to commemorate and spread awareness about the contribution of impactful revolutionary-era women. The Postmaster General appoints a committee of American citizens who provide expertise on history, science, art, sports, and other public interest subject matter. Since 1957, the Citizen's Stamp Advisory Committee has met quarterly to review subjects for stamp concepts. Their recommendations on stamp subject matter is then forwarded to the Postmaster General who makes the final determination.

Before reaching the desk of the Postmaster general, a stamp set subject is submitted by any American citizen who completes the recommendation process. To recommend a stamp set subject to the Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee (CSAC), there are eleven requirements that the subject must meet. Of the eleven criteria that must be met for a stamp to be accepted as a valid suggestion, there is one specific element that has guided the formation of the research question this project is set to answer; the subject or subjects must have made an extraordinary and enduring contribution to American society, history, culture or environment. Additionally, interested parties should submit a proposed issuance date, pertinent historical information, and important dates associated with the subject. The execution of a stamp design is not as simple as suggesting a subject and seeing it in post offices across the nation, rather it is a research intense process that could take up to three years before any result is seen.

The CSAC and its process allows for any United States citizen to suggest a commemorative stamp or commemorative stamp set, and given the current political climate and resurgence of women's rights organizations and movements, a stamp set of extraordinary revolutionary women will be well received. Keeping the process in mind for suggesting a stamp set, a central research question of '*Which American women have made extraordinary contributions that are long lasting in American History and are deserving of a commemorative postage stamp?*'

The following women, after extensive research, have been determined to have made an extraordinary contribution that is long lasting in American history.

First Ladies: *Martha Washington & Abigail Adams*

Famous Relatives: *Jane Mecom Franklin & Elizabeth Hamilton*

Molly Pitchers: *Margaret Corbin & Mary Ludwig Hays*

Undercover Soldiers: *Betty Zane & Deborah Sampson*

Spies and Rebels: *Sybil Ludington, Lydia Darragh & Nancy Hart*

Pioneers: *Penelope Barker, Phillis Wheatley, & Penelope Barker.*

Regardless of the wait or work, to promote the idea that women were just as influential before, during, and after the American Revolution as men will prove to be worth every step:

The fourteen women have been given labels and placed into chapters of similar characters or commonalities. The first two chapters cover women of significant means or stature. The two first

ladies that have made extraordinary impacts on U.S. History were Martha Washington and Abigail Adams. Their inclusion in this list are not merely because they were married to the nation's first two presidents, but because their contributions outside of that role were remarkable and extraordinary. Martha Washington displayed remarkable bravery as evidenced by a ballad written by an eyewitness and Abigail Adams contributed much more than domestic aid to her Husband's political career as shown in their abundance of correspondence

Additionally, two women included, seemingly, because of their notable surnames. Jane Mecom Franklin and Elizabeth Hamilton were related to founding fathers who did not become Commanders in Chief. Jane Mecom Franklin was the sister and trusted confidant to the renowned Benjamin Franklin. Her role as his emotional companion is revealed through extensive letter writing between brother and sister. She possessed a great level of intelligence similar to her brother, yet in a time when women were meant only to keep house. Elizabeth Hamilton, throughout her long life was not only the wife to financier, Alexander Hamilton, but also a proud historian of her husband's life, a philanthropist, and a well-read informed woman of the aristocracy as seen in her actions following her husband's death.

The chapters following the more well-known revolutionary women feature soldiers either in disguise or boldly in their petticoats. Margaret Corbin and Mary Ludwig Hays, given the endearing title of Molly Pitcher both leapt into action when their troops needed them. They provided water, thus the name, and aid to wounded soldiers. Their stories are told through pension applications and monuments erected in their name. Others such as Betty Zane and Deborah Sampson contributed directly to the revolutionary cause. Betty Zane, as part of the siege of Fort Henry braved gun and cannon fire to retrieve more black powder while Deborah

Sampson disguised herself as a male soldier to serve during the war. Like the “Molly Pitchers”, their stories are reflected in pension applications and word of mouth.

In the final chapters, featured, are women who were not content in just serving a domestic role. One of these women was Sybil Ludington, known as the female Paul Revere, who gathered intelligence on British activity and called out the volunteer militia by riding through the night, alone, on horseback, at the age of 16. Her actions were rewarded when lives were spared, and her legacy lived on via oral history. Another remarkable woman, Lydia Darragh, a Quaker, used her proximity to British General Howe to gather Intel on British plans to surprise General Washington and his tired troops just outside of Philadelphia and warned Washington resulting in a standoff. Third in the spies and rebels’ distinction, is Nancy Hart, a pioneer woman who defended her homestead by force and musket. Elizabeth Ellet, an early women’s historian, reports Hart’s story as told to her by a neighbor. The story is laced with excitement and bravery.

Finally, some of the women on this list can be classified, simply, as pioneers. Penelope Barker, an organizer of a second tea party in Edenton took initiative and inspiration from her British comrades. Her contribution has been commemorated by preserving her home and recognized as one of the first women to orchestrate an all-women’s political effort. Esther DeBerdt Reed, close friend of Martha Washington was the leader of the Ladies of Philadelphia, an organization dedicated to providing aid to the continental army. Her efforts are reflected in the 1780 *Sentiments of an American Woman* in which she pleads with other women across the colonies to help the lethargic troops. Finally, Phillis Wheatley, a young slave girl to a New England family took advantage of her education to write poetry about the Revolutionary era in which she lived. Her work was well received and when she went to publish her first and only

work, she was verified to have been the author by over 10 influential men including John Hancock.

Research supports the findings that the fourteen women as listed above are deserving of a commemorative stamp. Their contributions to the revolutionary cause are notable, extraordinary, and enduring in the History of the United States and make a powerful stamp set design. The Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee will receive a summary of the research with an extensive biography attached to a letter of interest, proposed issuance day, and proposed stamp set design.

Chapter 1: United States Postal History

On many cold evenings in Colonial New England, many a patron walked into a tavern to get warm by both the corner wood oven and the spirits served by a tavern keeper. In Boston, Massachusetts in 1639 on the eastern side of Washington street between State and Water Streets, there stood a tavern kept by Richard Fairbanks.¹ It was at this tavern that the first overseas mail from Europe was received in 1639, thus distinguishing this tavern as the first post office in the American colonies. Letters were delivered not by postal carriers, but by Mr. Fairbanks tacking them to one of the 'posts' in the entrance to the tavern's cellar.²

Of course, post offices have come far from these early methods of delivery. Out of necessity, any sort of postal system needed to be more secure. In Fairbank's tavern, the person who picked up the letter with intent to deliver it would more often open it just looking for the latest news rather than simply deliver the letter to the intended recipient.³ The site of the first purposely designed Post Office was later built on the very same spot as Fairbank's tavern. Privacy was a crucial factor in the construction of a designated location for picking up and dropping off correspondence. One of the other motivators was profit.

Following Fairbank's tavern, A central postal organization came to the colonies in 1691, when the British Crown issued a grant to the Colonies. Specifically, the grant was to:

"to erect, settle, and establish within the chief parts of their majesties' colonies and plantations in America, an office or offices for receiving and dispatching letters and pacquets, and to receive, send, and deliver the same under such rates and

¹ Gavin R. Nathan, *Historic Taverns of Boston; 370 Years of Tavern History in One Definitive Guide*. (New York, NY: iUniverse, Inc., 2006) 53.

² Gavin R. Nathan, *Historic Taverns of Boston* 54.

³ Nathan, 54.

sums of money as the planters shall agree to give, and to hold and enjoy the same for the term of twenty-one years."⁴

Both the British Crown and the Colonies realized the money-making potential in a postal system that spanned the eastern colonies. The Crown realized this potential was so great that they purchased the rights back from the Deputy Postmaster General, Mr. John Hamilton in 1707 before the grant fulfilled its twenty-one-year term.⁵ From the acquisition of rights by the British Monarchy until July 25, 1775 when the Continental Congress, the revolutionary body of government in the American Colonies, resolved to establish its own postal system independent of British rule.⁶

Perhaps the most famous postmaster general, and first under the new American government is Benjamin Franklin of Philadelphia. Benjamin Franklin had prior experience as a deputy postmaster general while the post system was still within British jurisdiction. In his position, Franklin set out to reorganize the postal service. Franklin was also experienced in the customer experience in the postal system. He and his beloved sister, Jane Mecom Franklin wrote letters frequently between Boston and Philadelphia. From Franklin's acceptance of the title of Deputy Postmaster General, the American colonies and eventual United States saw an exponential growth in post offices and postal customers.

⁴Francis C. Huebner, "Our Postal System." *Records of the Columbia Historical Society, Washington D.C.*, no. 9, (1906), 126-74.

⁵ United States Postal System, "Colonial Times" *Publication 100- The United States Postal Service – An American History 1775-2006*. (November 2012): accessed November 9, 2017, https://about.usps.com/publications/pub100/pub100_002.htm.

⁶ Huebner

By 1855, well after the American Revolutionary War, yet on the eve of the American Civil War, pre-payment of postage became mandatory in the United States. Pre-payment took form in adhesive labels much like the British Royal Mail's *Penny Black*. The Penny Black was the first adhesive stamp of its kind that boasted a profile image of Queen Victoria. Pictured in Figure 1 to the left, below, is the first postal stamp ever issued in Great Britain and in the world in 1840. The United States followed suit shortly after the adoption of their mandatory pre-paid postage with the five cent Benjamin Franklin and the ten cent George Washington in 1847; pictured below in Figure 2 on the right.



Figure 1: Penny Black ⁷



Figure 2: One Cent Franklin and Washington ⁸

Commemorative postage stamps have always been an excellent way of honoring the memory of someone or something that has made a lasting impact on the history of the United States. In 1957, The Citizen's Stamp Advisory Committee (CSAC) was established to screen

⁷ *Penny Black with check letters P L* January 27, 1971 Calthorpe House, The Royal Mail Archive, The Postal Museum. London, England.

⁸ Gwillhickers. *US Postage Stamps, Washington-Franklin Issues, two 1-cent examples*. 1908 and 1910, U.S. Post Office. Bureau of Engraving and Printing,

suggestions for commemorative stamps. The committee, on average, is comprised of ten to fifteen members. The present committee is comprised of eleven members. These eleven members provide expertise on history, science, art, sports, and other public interest matters. There is a process for stamp review but it all starts with a suggestion by any American citizen.

Although to many, the stamp selection process may seem like an elaborative suggestion box, there is a strict set of guidelines each stamp, and stamp set must meet to even be considered. The eleven requirements are included in an appendix for reference. The main point in these eleven requirements is to guarantee that frivolous suggestions are not made and to streamline the process. In general, a stamp subject, must have had a significant impact on American history and more specifically, the stamp subject must include a theme of widespread national appeal and significance. Due to certain limitations, of course, some stamp subjects are not chosen for publication.

Once the stamp set subject has been determined, the interested party must submit a proposed issuance date, pertinent historical information and important dates associated with the subject. The recommendation packet is then forwarded from the committee to the Postmaster General who makes the final determination. This process has been in place for sixty years, thus resulting in an abundance of commemorative stamps. In 2016, nearly nineteen billion United States postage stamps were printed and over \$400 million in stamps and stamp products have been generated.⁹

In its history, the postal system has been motivated by monetary gain, from the first post office and postal carriers, through the British acquisition of the Central Postal System

⁹ United States Postal Service, "Postage Stamps" Accessed August 2, 2017. <https://about.usps.com/who-we-are/postal-facts/postage-stamps.htm>.

and their own postal system, the monetary value has been a constant motivator for growth and commemorative stamps have been a driver for this growth over time resulting in the massive profits by the USPS.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

On January 21, 2017, women from all over the world congregated and marched on their cities in the largest female rights march in history. There were marches in London, Charleston, Paris and Singapore, but the largest and epicenter of them all was in Washington D.C. Despite widely held belief, women gathered from across the nation not to put down the newly elected President, but to preemptively protect their rights as women and to bring women's issues directly to the figurative table. In a widely read fashion magazine, *Glamour*, a reporter Anna Holmes discusses the various women that organized the protest. Holmes quotes one organizer, Vanessa Wruble, "I saw it as an opportunity to try to build a coalition among women from different backgrounds..."¹⁰

The biggest cheers at the rally as evidenced both reported by the reporter from *Glamour* and from personal witness statements, were not for anti-President Trump comments, rather they were for the strong invocation of the bonds of sisterhood. The speeches that empowered women and the speeches that boasted female strength were the most loudly applauded. It is the attitude of sisterhood that has opened the door to so many interested parties to study and appreciate women's history. While the works of authors such as Carol Berkin and Elizabeth Ellet were published well before the January 2017 Women's March, these works have gained a new popularity among gender historians.

Specifically works that are centered on women who participated in extraordinary ways during the Revolutionary war are celebrated now just as the women in the crowds lining the

¹⁰ Anna Holmes, "How the Women's March Organizers Sparked a Movement—and They're Still Fighting for You" *Glamour Magazine*, (October 30, 2017): <https://www.glamour.com/story/women-of-the-year-2017-womens-march> Accessed October 31, 2017

streets of Washington D.C. marched with portraits of women like Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman and carried quotes by Abigail Adams exclaiming to “Remember the ladies!” The women of the past served as models for women in the present. Because of the resurgence in feminism, and studying extraordinary females from our past, there is a great deal of value in the works written about historic women, particularly those who were active during the revolution. These women are cherished now because of their fiery spirits and willingness to step up and fight when some men could not.

Historiography, in literal terms, means the history of history. In many cases, it is imperative for all research on any given subject to have a historiography study completed to fully grasp the vastness or scarcity of any given topic. In many instances, it’s a study of the more notable historians to write on the subject and what their works have done to impact the subject. In the case of Women’s history, the historiography is so great that it would occupy much of a project. In the narrowing of this broad subject, to just the Revolutionary War era, the sources and stand-out historians become much clearer.

Of the Historians that have completed notable works about women during the American Revolution, there are three that have made the most impact on the subject with either comprehensive works or multiple works on the same subject. The first of these three is Elizabeth Ellet and her 1848 series *Revolutionary Women in the War for American Independence*. Most likely the first work of its kind, Ellet not only breaks ground by writing a women’s history but also narrows in on a specific era. Additionally, in this work, Ellet recognizes the sad fact that much of the materials have gone missing and that there has been a death of information. Ellet notes that other than the letters of Mrs. Adams, the other stories of female heroism that complete

the amount of published information on the subject are already in many other historical works.¹¹ From the writing of Ellet that primary sources are not as easy to come by on the subject, and so we as historians are left to decipher the anecdotal sidebars in previously written histories of the era.

In defense of Ellet's defeated attitude, at the time of her writing *Revolutionary Women in the War for American Independence*, 1848, most primary sources were difficult to uncover. There were still many letters that had not surfaced in defense of the female hero in the Revolution. If Ellet were writing today, she may have a similar complaint, in that, a lot of primary sources that would shed some light on the heroism of women have either been privately acquired, or are exhibited in Museums. Of course, not all hope is lost because there are sources such as the letters between Mr. and Mrs. Adams, and those letters reveal a lot about life as it was to be a woman during the late 1700's and specifically the life of Mrs. Adams.

Other than a pessimistic belief that information on the topic has died, Ellet has contributed to this conversation by including women who are much less commonly known to the public as being heroines during the war. For instance, while other works elaborate greatly on the first ladies, Martha Washington and Abigail Adams, Ellet's work brings women like Nancy Hart into the light as being Revolutionary war heroes as well.

Ellet writes "The heroism of the Revolutionary women has passed from remembrance with the generation who witnessed it; or is seen only by faint and occasional glimpses through

¹¹ Lincoln Diamant, Ed. *Revolutionary Women in the War for American Independence: A One-Volume Revised Edition of Elizabeth Ellet's 1848 Landmark Series*. (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1998), 15.

the gatherings obscurity of tradition.”¹² Ellet’s attempt to keep the memories of impactful women during the war and the inclusion of the less commonly known women is what makes this work so monumental in the study of revolutionary women.

Another author that has impacted the study of female revolutionaries is Carol Berkin. Her work, *Revolutionary Mothers: Women in the Struggle for American Independence* is like Elizabeth Ellet’s work in that there is a lot of discussion of less known historical figures. *Revolutionary Mothers* independent of any work before it, though, has been deemed the “mother” of all books about the subject. Many scholarly articles consult Berkin’s work when discussing women during the war for a social history that focuses on all classes and races.

Berkin drives the point that the Revolutionary war was not a story of gender, in that one gender dominated its successes or failures, but rather it is a story of both classic genders of male and female. *Revolutionary Mothers* even goes as far to assert that women played a vital role in the war, so vital that in some instances the roles played by women dominated the narrative over men, yet much of this history is left out of History Books.

Additionally, *Revolutionary Mothers*, does not romanticize any of the female heroes or their roles. In learning the nation’s history, many American’s would prefer to see the “heroic commanders standing tall in rowboats, and lovely women busily stitching together the new American flag.”¹³ Berkin, however breaks the spell and admits that “the men and women who lived through it (the Revolutionary War) have a very different story to tell, more complex, and in

¹² Diamant, 27.

¹³ Carol Berkin, *Revolutionary Mothers: Women in the Struggle for America’s Independence* (New York, NY: Random House, Inc., 2005), ix.

the end, more relevant to us as their heirs and descendants.”¹⁴ Rather than continuing the romanticized version, Berkin and *Revolutionary Mothers* take a sterile approach to the stories and their lives, to punctuate reality.

Along with the valuable material within *Revolutionary Mothers*, Carol Berkin, herself, is an asset to the study of colonial America and Early American history given her other works and their focuses. Other than *Revolutionary Mothers*, Carol Berkin has written *A Brilliant Solution; Inventing the American Constitution, First Generations; Women in Colonial America*, and *Jonathan Sewall; Odyssey of an American Loyalist*.

Cokie Roberts, author of *Founding Mothers* and *Ladies of Liberty*, as well as several other works is a leading historian about Revolutionary Women. Roberts is a political commentator for ABC News and serves as senior news analyst for National Public Radio. Her works about Revolutionary era remarkable women are like both Carol Berkin and Elizabeth Ellet in that she discusses several different women and their stories. The differences between her and other historians lie in the women Roberts chose to showcase. In *Founding Mothers*, published in 2004, Roberts highlights the lives of women who influenced the Founding Fathers; by Robert’s own note, “these are elite women.”¹⁵ Her writing ranges from discussions about Martha Washington and Abigail Adams to Molly Pitcher and Lydia Darragh. This work is comprehensive, but limited intentionally to only women that had influence over founding fathers or some sort of familial relation.

¹⁴ Berkin, ix.

¹⁵ Cokie Roberts, *Founding Mothers: The Women Who Raised Our Nation*. (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 2004), xi

In her second work on the subject published in 2008, *Ladies of Liberty: The Women Who Shaped our Nation*, much of the focus has shifted from less known stories and women to the main players. These women include Abigail Adams, Martha Washington, Dolley Madison, and other ladies that rose to the title of First Lady alongside their notable husbands. Also included is Elizabeth Hamilton, famed wife and companion to Founding Father, Alexander Hamilton. The subjects are familiar in this work, but the sources are not and that is the value in this source to the historiography of remarkable revolutionary women.

Roberts, Berkin, and Ellet are all leading historians of the topic and their contributions to the subject are groundbreaking. There is a gap, though, in the historiography that must be addressed currently. Many of the less known women such as Lydia Darragh or Betty Zane are skimmed over, if mentioned at all. The contributions of women such as Abigail Adams and Elizabeth Hamilton severely overshadow those of less known women in many of the books on the subject. There has yet to be a landmark study that places all the women during the Revolution on the same plane.

Two instances of public history have come near to closing that gap. One is the National Women's History Museum in Washington D.C. The museum itself has changed the way that the nation thinks about women's history in that women do not have a separate history from men rather the two histories coexist along the same timeline. There are exhibits about women of NASA that coincide with a general American history about space travel. The difference is that the National Women's History museum exhibit focuses, obviously, on only women and their role at NASA. The National Women's History Museum (NWHM) has also been progressive in

providing primary sources and biographies of women on their website. In a way, the NWHM closes the gap of a major work that pays equal attention to the women of the Revolution.

Another public history effort that has attempted to close this gap is a 1975 set of stamps from the United States Postal System called *Contributors to the Cause*. This effort is the only other postal system effort to create a stamp centered around Revolutionary figures. Although this public history act does not close the indicated gap, it is part of a long history of commemorative stamps.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Implementation of CSAC Recommendation

The research on this project, in a way, very much began from two reference collections of stories. The encyclopedias of Women's History served as an initial qualifying reference, but from that point, more scholarly sources were consulted. After the thesis was formulated, a sort of hobby-like, almost frantic search for sources became the priority. As each woman was added to a list, the James and Weatherford reference materials were consulted to familiarize the researcher with the stories of each woman. Finding sources then became a much more fluid process. Once a geographic location was identified from either personal knowledge or the reference materials, finding local historical societies became a much easier task.

A lot of the primary sources utilized in the research and writing of the stamp proposal came from local historical societies and small museums. An example of this is seen in the profile on Penelope Barker. Edenton, North Carolina, housed their historical commission at what has become the Penelope Barker House Welcome Center. It is from their resources that the primary sources came in relation to the story of Ms. Barker.

The rest of the research process followed conventional practices and procedures including ethical considerations. This includes consulting any online resources and services such as JSTOR which is an online repository for scholarly journals and primary sources. Additionally, also online, The National Women's History Museum website has done an outstanding job at providing biographies of notable female historical figures. There are decades succeeding the revolutionary era that are featured as well, but of those featured from colonial America, many were women featured on my own preliminary list. This was essential in laying the groundwork for each biographical study.

Since each revolutionary era woman has her own set of corresponding research sources, the task arises to narrow down what sources are scholarly, what sources are primary and what sources are secondary. Additionally, various connections between the different women become abundantly clear and deciding which sources can be used in an overarching sense becomes yet another task.

In selecting and interpreting sources for balancing conclusions about each woman. According to professional standard, weight is given properly to each source based on their academic merit. Meaning, secondary sources that have not been peer-reviewed do not lay the foundation for an essential argument. If any are used, they are merely to supplement the story. Due and owing to the strict standards placed on researchers and historians, the ethical and scholarly value of the research behind an all-female revolutionary stamp set is great.

Following the research course, began an approximately ten week writing process. The writing process, due to a foundation laid during the research portion, is a much more fluid process. Much of the writing is left to the discretion of the historian and the process is only successful when personal preferences in writing are adhered to. For the project reflected here, the writing process began as a bulleted outline of the sources and their valuable information. From there, organization of the project as far as the outlining of sections began. It was during this process that the decision to segment the women into like categories took place. Finally, while each narrative came to life, the historian formatted the work to standard as prescribed by the institution.

The design of the stamps, themselves, was a process on its own. Benjamin T. Fake is a designer in Pennsylvania, he is the artist and designer for the proposed stamp set. He graduated

from Kutztown University of Pennsylvania in 2015 obtaining a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Communication Design with specific concentrations in Graphic Design and Advertising.

The artist found that this project reminded him of his creative abilities to add style to any character to enhance their expression. He drew inspiration from the fact that despite societal class, the women in the project stood up for their country and held true to their beliefs. This inspiration is seen in the assorted colors the artist uses to depict the revolutionary era fashion in each portrait.

Although the illustration is original, the artist began the task at hand by researching each woman on his own and in consult with the author. He then found the most high-quality portrait style images of each woman and traced rough sketches using a micron ink pen onto tracing paper. While tracing these faces the artist held a loose hand and traced with a unique graphic style. He was solely focused on making up the character out of outlines and shapes adding his own flare with some shapes and lines.

Once these rough outlines were complete the artist transferred the outlines to water color paper retracing each line with black ink. Once the ink dried he added the water color. Once all portraits and backgrounds were finished the artist scanned the illustrations into the computer and into the stamp template for printing.

The intended audience for this endeavor is, of course, the Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee or CSAC for short. Presently there are eleven members of the CSAC. The members are all of varying backgrounds and specialties and knowing these specialties. There are no historians by trade on the committee other than Dr. Cheryl R. Ganz who is the curator of

Philately Emerita, and former chief curator of Philately. She is also the former lead curator of the William H. Gross Stamp gallery at the Smithsonian National Postal Museum. Her credentials lead me to believe that the more emphasis I can place on the stamps value given current events, the more chance there will be for success. Additionally, there are at least four or five members with marketing and design background. Although it does not have as much to do with the research, it is important to include a proposed design and justification for said design.

Other Committee members include Gail Anderson, partner at Anderson Newton Design and instructor as well as author; Peter Argentine, founder of Argentine Productions specializing in media design and production for museums, national parks, visitor centers, science centers and television; Justin Bua an award-winning artist known for his style of “distorted urban realism”; B.J. Bueno, founder of The Cult Branding Company and partner at Nonbox consulting; Janet Klug, Committee Chair, philatelist and author; Carolyn Lewis, former chief executive of Texwood Furniture Inc, former Governor, and a member of the U.S. Postal Service Board of Governors; Harry Rinker, antiques and collectibles appraiser, author, collector, columnist, educator, and lecture; Maruchi Santana, founder of Parham Santana- The Brand Extension Agency; Katherine C. Tobin, Ph.D., China Economic and Security Review Commission, former Governor, member of the U.S.P.S. Board of Governors and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Education; and Donna de Varona, TV Sports commenter, Olympic swimming champion, select Director of the Board for the U.S. Soccer Foundation.

This CSAC is comprised of notable men and women and knowing their professions allows the project and eventual application to be edited to make the most impact on the eleven professionals appointed.

Chapter 4: Extraordinary Profiles

FIRST LADIES

The 21st century has brought about an abundance of change, especially with regards to technology. Certain technological innovations have made it possible to receive messages within a second of its creation and possible now to reach billions of people across social media outlets. In January of 2017, former first lady used the social media platform, twitter to convey her last tweet as first lady. It reads “Being your First Lady has been the greatest honor of my life and I hope I’ve made you proud.”¹ This simple one sentence reached millions of twitter users with as many as 45,000 twitter users retweeting the message. This means that 45,000 people found former First Lady Michele Obama’s one sentence farewell powerful enough to share even further.

While the current century has shepherded in the capabilities to spread information faster than ever, there is one element that has remained the same and that is desire to uphold tradition as a first lady. There is a profound honor in the position of First Lady that has been carried out since Martha Washington. Of course, history paints her as a quiet player in the shadow of her husband’s glory, but Martha Dandridge Custis Washington grew into her own light as a profound and unequivocal player in the American revolution. Her actions as First Lady became the standard for those who succeeded her, including Abigail Adams.

MARTHA WASHINGTON

As First Lady, Martha Washington set precedent with every step she took. She was the first First Lady and her example would be followed by every other First Lady down the line. She

¹ Michele Obama. Twitter Post. January 6, 2017 11:27 AM, <https://twitter.com/flotus44/status/817452429314785280>, accessed October 31, 2017.

set a tone of elegance; the tone was enough to be taken seriously by European diplomats, yet open and *American* to match the tone of the new nation.² Beloved by the troops as much as her husband, Martha Washington was truly a mother to the new nation.

Martha Dandridge was born on June 2, 1731 in Virginia. She was the oldest of eight children. The Dandridge family was of moderate means, by no mean wealthy. Yet, Martha and her siblings grew up learning the nuances of a wealthy status. At age eighteen, Martha Dandridge married Daniel Parke Custis. The Custis family had an exceptional amount of wealth leaving Martha and Daniel without want or desire. Eight years into their marriage, Martha became a widow and heir to a sizeable estate. It is no wonder, that her status and beauty would attract a young George Washington.

At the time of their courting, George was commander of the Virginia Force in the French and Indian War. George and Martha were married in 1759 and began life together at Mount Vernon, Washington's plantation along the Potomac River. Martha assumed full management of Mount Vernon and created a warm and inviting compound for which it is famous. The increasing tension in 1775 led to General Washington to be chosen as the commander of the American forces against Great Britain. While George Washington made his own history throughout his military achievements, Martha was making her mark too.

Her extraordinary contribution to the war is reflected in the admiration she received from the soldiers that fought alongside her husband. Despite her upbringing and poised attitude, Martha Washington never feared battle. She joined her husband, first, at his headquarters in Cambridge, MA in December of 1775. Her companionship to George did not cease in

² Cokie Roberts, *Ladies of Liberty: The Women Who Shaped Our Nation*. (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 2008), 11.

Cambridge, rather she followed him to Valley Forge, PA, Newburgh, N.Y, and in 1778, at the Battle of Monmouth. ‘Lady’ Washington arrived to meet her husband and her presence at the battle was recorded first hand in the form of a ballad, by a seemingly unknown author. In this ballad, Martha searches for her hero, her George.

“Hark! The hoarse thunder! Shakes the earth’s Centre,
 The groans and the clashing of arms;
 kind heaven prove a friend, and my hero George defend,
 shield protect, secure him from harm!

Balls, bombs and langrage—groans, death and carnage
 The hills and caverns resound
 The fields are covered over with firearms of purple gore,
 and the Dead lie in heaps on the ground!”³

The ballad, on its face, is the opposite of female strength and heroism; celebrating the heroism of a woman’s husband, Martha’s George. It isn’t until the fourth and fifth verses quoted above the severity of the situation Martha Washington was walking into is magnified. It is not her dedication to her husband that makes her a true hero in the War, it is not her blind love that is the extraordinary contribution to American History. Rather, it is the bravery in entering an active war zone and remaining pleasant and calm. Not only was her face calming and reassuring to the tired soldiers but she along with the *Ladies of Philadelphia* organized by Ms. Esther DeBerdt Reed contributed material goods to the soldiers.⁴

³ "Saw Ye My Hero George," American Antiquarian Society, 1810-1814 accessed October 11, 2017
<http://www.americanantiquarian.org/thomasballads/items/show/217>

⁴ *Portrait of Martha Dandridge Washington*, circa 1800-1825. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution.

General Washington and his troops, while stationed in Cambridge just outside Boston Massachusetts, was joined yet again by his loving Martha. She wrote some correspondence while in Cambridge and commented on the progress of the war to loved ones. In a letter dated, January 31, 1776 Martha first scolds her sister for not writing sooner and more often, but then details the concern over the whereabouts of British Commander-in-chief, General Clinton. She does boast of the American troops' progression by writing, "I suppose they will be glad for a place where they may have more room as they cannot get out anyway here but by water."⁵ She, of course, was referring to the Boston area and the Boston Harbor. She continues, "our navy has been very successful in taking their vessels two was taken last week loaded with coles and potatoes wines & several other articles for the use of the troops." Her proven presence at the camps is evidence of her dedication to the Revolutionary cause and the success of the new nation.

Martha Washington was cherished by troops and the nation just as much as her husband was. The arrival of Martha Washington and other General's wives inspired fortitude in the troops. ⁶ Her southern grace added to her revolutionary bravery and dedication made Martha Washington an extraordinary woman and suitable first First Lady of the United States of America.

ABIGAIL ADAMS

Successor as First Lady, the bold New Englander, Abigail Smith Adams, did not have the same financial advantages, nor did it seem she had any interest in being as quiet and polite as her predecessor. Despite being less poised and naturally wealthy, Mrs. Adams was a host in herself

⁵ Martha Washington, "Letter to Anna Maria Bassett, January 31, 1776." In Joseph E. Fields. *Worthy Partner': The Papers of Martha Washington*. (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1994)

⁶ Lonelle Aikman, "Patriots in Petticoats," *National Geographic* Vol 49, No. 4 (October 1975): 480.

and consistently proving herself to be more of a partner than a wife to the second president, Mr. John Adams. In a portrait completed in 1754 by artist Benjamin Blyth, her character is reflected not by beautiful features.⁷ Instead, Blyth captured her rough features reflecting a strong, poised, and resourceful character as shown in Figure 3.



Figure 3: Benjamin Blyth's Portrait of Abigail Adams

Born in Weymouth Massachusetts in 1744, Abigail Smith was raised in a distinguished New England family. Despite their distinction, though, Abigail was brought up in a simple, rural neighborhood with little access to formal instruction. After learning the value of education and experiencing much of the world for herself, she wrote in 1817, "I never was sent to any school. I was always sick. Female education in the best families went no further than writing and arithmetic."⁸ Her lack of education did not prohibit her from become one of the greatest letter writers of all time.

Abigail Smith and John Adams were married in 1764 initiating a fifty-four-year partnership. At only nineteen years old, Abigail was thrust into an exciting life of law, politics, and a distant husband. Before John became a delegate and left Abigail to take care of house and home, they had five children, perhaps the most famous of the five, John Quincy the sixth President of the United States. The five children were all born between 1765 and 1775, the ten years during which most of the tensions with Great Britain were the highest. The hardships of

⁷ Benjamin Blyth, *Abigail (Smith) Adams* 1754, Online Collection, Massachusetts Historical Society. https://www.masshist.org/database/viewer.php?item_id=69&mode=large&img_step=1&, Accessed November 1, 2017

⁸ Charles Francis Adams, *Familiar Letters of John Adams and his Wife Abigail Adams, During the Revolution with a Memoir of Mrs. Adams*. (Boston MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1875): xi.

war left many women across the colonies widowed or without their husbands for extended periods of time and Abigail and the children were no exception.

It is in the absence of her husband, John, that Abigail truly shines as an extraordinary woman during the Revolutionary era. There are two reasons for which Abigail is given this distinction. The first is her reputation of being an extremely effective farm owner and businesswoman. She bought farm stock, hired help on the farmstead while simultaneously being an attentive mother, landlord, and wife.

Her ability to take care of her family, the family business, and her husband's affairs all during war with the constant threat of danger hanging over them is one thing that distinguishes Abigail as an extraordinary contributor to the history of the United States, but one other previously alluded to fact equally qualifies her; her letter writing. In an abundance of letters and correspondence, Abigail's emotions, thoughts, and daily endeavors, are revealed. In this way she was an historian of her own life. The value in her letters goes beyond primary sources, but rather they are perhaps the most concrete evidence of the earliest women's suffrage sentiments.

In one of the many letters between husband and wife, Abigail starts her writing by admitting a longing she has for her husband, followed by a quick status update of their property and business affairs, then speaks as freely as she can as if her husband were in the same room about the rights of women and the power they ought to have. This letter, written March 31, 1776 is one that is quoted often when discussing women's rights. Several lines into the letter Abigail writes, "I long to hear that you have declared an independency."⁹ She, of course, is speaking of the anticipated Declaration of Independence that would come two short months later, but what

⁹ "Adams Family Correspondence, Volume 1, December 1761-May 1776" *The Adams Papers Digital Edition*, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2008–2017). 370

follows is evidence of her passion for politics. She writes, “—and by the way in the new Code of Laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make I desire you would remember the ladies and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors.”¹⁰

It is entirely understandable why, so many women’s rights movements have attached to this line of correspondence. The rights of women have been questioned since 1776 as evidenced by Abigail Adams, therefore, it is an important statement for all women’s rights issues. This alone does not qualify as the extraordinary contribution to American History, rather it was her insistence in being a part of her husband’s life, professionally and politically. Abigail Adams can be considered responsible for keeping John Adams’ head level during the presidency and throughout his legislative endeavors.

Abigail Adams, for her commitment to domesticity amidst war time conditions and her political prowess and influence within her marriage to the second President of the United States is considered an extraordinary figure within the history of the United States. Her grace and elegance made her attractive during her life, but it is her honesty and integrity that distinguishes her character well after her death.

FAMOUS LAST NAMES

A person’s name given to them at birth is accompanied by a family or surname. In diverse cultures, last names are more than one name, or the order of the names are reversed, but in the United States, names are given as your first name and your surname or last name. In the United States, the top three most popular last names with regards to use and frequency were

¹⁰ “Adams Family Correspondence, 370.

Smith, Johnson, and Williams according to the United States Census Bureau.¹¹ These last names are identifying factors for determining many cultural characteristics. The surnames can reveal a likely ancestry, race, and family origin. But there are also things that a last name does not reveal.

One personal identifier that is not revealed via surname is a person's gender. Most commonly, the first name given to a person hints at a person's gender, but not in all cases. An abundance of possibilities arises when it comes to names and gender. One instance, and perhaps a very common one is in marriage when one partner adopts the last name of their new spouse. For most women, the prior surname then becomes a maiden name. Last names are important too in feeling a sense of kinship. Some families have famous or highly recognizable surnames because of notable family members. Examples include, The Kennedys, The Rockefellers, The Trumps, and The Kardashians. Many notable women married into or were born as a member of these families, but it takes a truly extraordinary woman to have made an impact on the Revolutionary War due to and despite their famous last name. Two of those women are Jane Franklin Mecom and Elizabeth Hamilton.

JANE FRANKLIN MECOM

As the sister of Benjamin Franklin, Jane was a woman who used her maiden name after marriage much like other women who had an important public image prior to marriage that they wanted to preserve. Her brother, Benjamin, had been an extremely well-known figure during the Colonial and Revolutionary eras in the United States and abroad. Benjamin and Jane were extremely affectionate in their letters and developed an inseparable bond over their lives

¹¹ United States Census Bureau, "Hello my name is... Top 15 Most Popular Last Names in the U.S. by Rank" *Most Popular Surnames in the United States* (December 15, 2016): https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/2016/comm/cb16-tps154_surnames_top15.html, accessed November 1, 2017,

although they spent very little time together in person. Much like other women of the era, Jane Mecom wrote to her brother and over time, collected a abundance of letters to and from Mr. Benjamin Franklin while in France, Philadelphia, England, and nearly everywhere else he had travelled.

Jane, one of seventeen children was born in March 1712. She and her brother, Benjamin, had a typical 16th Century childhood riddled with labor, a lack of education, and economic difficulties. Unlike her brother, her economic status did not change much even after marrying Edward Mecom at age fifteen. She began having children at age seventeen and slipped into the monotony of Colonial American life leaving little behind at her passing other than the letters that were preserved between her brother Benjamin and herself.

Benjamin and Jane could not have led more opposite lives. Benjamin Franklin left their childhood home, learned to read and to write with elegance and poise. He became a distinguished statesman, philosopher, inventor and is famed as one of the most influential figures in the Revolution. Jane, on the other hand never left their home in Boston, never learned to spell, and amounted to a wife, mother, and widow.¹² While the task of being a wife, mother, and then widow is enough to make a woman extraordinary, Jane's story is about how she perfectly embodied the other side of American history, despite her famous last name and brother.

Jane lived her life with significantly less means and less wealth than her brother, yet she strived to be able to keep up with him intellectually as evidenced in their many letters, but she wrote very little other than her "Book of Ages" which is more of a book of remembrance and a tale of life's beginnings and its ends, a "litany of grief, a history, in brief, of a life lived rags to

¹² Jill Lepore, Preface.

raggs.”¹³ Regardless of her economic status, her extraordinary quality was that she thirsted for knowledge more than most women of her day, so she read and read until her last breath.

Jane Franklin Mecom’s contributions to the Revolution and the History of the United States of America is through the companionship she provided to one of the most influential Founding Fathers. Jane brought Benjamin Franklin boundless joy and offered a lot of her opinions to him, some of which he acted on. When Benjamin Franklin died in 1790, he left his sister Jane the house in which she lived and gave one hundred pounds to the public schools of Boston. Schools at which his sister may have attended had she been born later in the 16th century. Her legacy is much more indirect than the other notable women, but extraordinary nonetheless.

ELIZABETH HAMILTON

Elizabeth Schuyler, second daughter to Revolutionary War General Phillip Schuyler, was born in August of 1757 in Albany New York. Her mother was a model of courage in young Elizabeth’s childhood. As the British troops began marching on Saratoga many rebel families fled south for safety. Catherine Schuyler, Elizabeth’s mother, drove her wagon towards the troops, in the direction of danger just to burn the wheat fields of her home before any enemy forces could harvest it. Without a doubt, Catherine served as an exceptional example of courage for all her children.¹⁴

In Morristown, New Jersey during the winter of 1790, Elizabeth Schuyler met Alexander Hamilton. The two, Elizabeth Schuyler of the distinguished New York Schuylers, and an immigrant new to the revolutionary scene, could not have been more opposite. It was his

¹³ Jill Lepore, “Poor Jane’s Almanac” *New York Times*, (April 23, 2011), <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/24/opinion/24lepore.html>, accessed November 3, 2017.

¹⁴ Roberts, *Ladies of Liberty*, 161.

incessant letter writing that eventually won her over. In a letter written to Elizabeth, Alexander gushes with affection for his Eliza, or Betsey as she is sometimes referred. He writes that even “a spirit entering into bliss, heaven opening upon all its faculties, cannot long more ardently for the enjoyment, than I do my darling Betsey, to taste the heaven that awaits me in your bosom.”¹⁵

The love letters were motivation for Elizabeth to fall for Alexander, but it is her strength and loyalty that made her the perfect companion for him and all his faults. Their own grandson, Allan McLane Hamilton, and author of a biography on the Founding Father on her devotion to her husband wrote, “Had she been any other than what she was, despite all his genius and force of character, Hamilton could never have attained the place he did.”¹⁶ In the end, the *place* Allan McLane Hamilton refers to was not one of financial stature. It was the fame he attained through his public service as Treasury Secretary. When Hamilton was killed in a duel, he left Elizabeth with very little thrusting her into a life of single motherhood and financial struggles. Friends of the family attempted to assist her. Governor Morris of New York organized a subscription fund among the friends of Hamilton, but given her maiden name, they were under assumptions that her finances were secure.¹⁷ Her father divided the family wealth upon his death among eight children equally, thus leaving very little for Elizabeth and the children.

Despite all the hardship brought on by her Husband’s death and the humiliation while he was living, Elizabeth went on to live an extraordinary 50 years after her husband’s death. In those fifty years, she contributed to the history of the United States by helping to raise funds with New York activist, Isabella Graham to fund the Orphan Asylum Society of New York. This

¹⁵ “From Alexander Hamilton to Elizabeth Schuyler 5 October 1780” *Founders Online*, National Archives. <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Hamilton/01-27-02-0001-0003>, accessed November 2, 2017

¹⁶ Allan McLane Hamilton, *The Intimate Life of Alexander Hamilton: Based Chiefly Upon Original Family Letters and Other Documents, Many of Which Have Never been Published*. (London, UK: Duckworth & Co, 1910), 103.

¹⁷ Ron Chernow, *Alexander Hamilton* (New York, NY: Penguin Group, 2004), 725.

would go on to still stand more than 200 years after it is built as a public orphanage for the adolescents of New York City.¹⁸ Additionally, Elizabeth Schuyler Hamilton helped to raise funds for the Washington Monument in DC to pay homage to the man that allowed so much opportunity for her late husband.¹⁹ Her contributions as a widow allow Elizabeth Hamilton to shine on her own, independent of her husband's accomplishments and distinguishes her as an impactful figure during and after the American Revolutionary Era.

“MOLLY PITCHER”

On Cemetery Avenue is an entrance to an old grave yard in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. The graveyard is located within the middle of the city and is not hard to pass it by mistake. Within the walls, though, are several Revolutionary War veterans. Their graves are adorned with a bronze circle and an American flag. At one entrance of the cemetery is a monument that lists the soldiers who lie buried in the grave yard. Of the over 60 names on the plaque, one significant name is missing; *Molly Pitcher*. In the South-Central region of Pennsylvania, Molly Pitcher is a name very familiar to the local population. Her name is taught in elementary schools as a sort of local hero. One question that still lingers though is *Who was Molly Pitcher?*

The answer that may be comforting to others may frustrate the rest. Molly pitcher is a persona to describe women who carried water to soldiers on the Battlefield. The likelihood that one woman that happened to carry water to injured and tired militia men happened to have “Pitcher” as a surname is very slim. Although it was customary to assign last names in relation to an occupation, the chances still are very low. Instead, Molly Pitcher is a nickname of sorts given

¹⁸ Graham Windham, *History*. <http://www.graham-windham.org/about-us/history>, accessed November 10, 2017.

¹⁹ Roberts. *Founding Mothers* 92.

to the camp followers that provided drinking water in time of need. The myth extends beyond an occupation, though, with stories of Molly or “Captain Molly” taking up arms or manning a cannon in her husband’s place.

The more details that surface from this folkloric tale make Molly Pitcher seem more and more like a living breathing woman. In consultation with documents of the time, most historians have been able to name at least two women that could be considered Molly Pitcher; Margaret Corbin and Mary Ludwig Hays.²⁰

MARGARET CORBIN

Margaret Cochran was born November 12, 1751 in what is present day Franklin County, Pennsylvania. She was orphaned at five years old when her father was killed, and her mother was captured during the Indian raids of 1756.²¹ There is very little known about her early childhood. Her marriage to John Corbin began shortly before the fighting in the American Revolution began and was thrust into the life of a camp follower. Camp followers were generally women who joined their husbands in war. The necessity for Women to accompany the militia men comes from a lack of opportunity for childless, young, and property less women. Because Margaret Corbin’s marriage to John Corbin was so young, they spent their first few years of marriage in a war zone.

At Fort Washington on Manhattan Island, New York, Margaret Corbin’s husband, John, was shot by Hessian soldiers and died immediately. Rather than taking time to mourn the death

²⁰ Emily J. Teipe. “Will the Real Molly Pitcher Please Stand Up?” *The National Archives* Vol 31, (Summer 1999), No.2. <https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/1999/summer/pitcher.html#nt4>, accessed November 4, 2017

²¹ New York State Legislature, Assembly, “Dedication of Fort Tyron Tablet” *Documents of the Assembly of the State of New York One Hundred and Thirty- Third Session*, Vol 31. No 65, Part 1, p.454.

of her Husband, Margaret, now a widow, jumped into action. She assumed his battle station and kept up the cannon fire and although she was wounded, she stayed her position until the post was surrendered. She was permanently disabled from the encounter and thus eligible not only for a military pension but also appreciation by Congress.²² In fact, Congress, at the time, recognized her services and resolved to award Corbin one half the monthly pay given to a commissioned soldier.

After the Revolution, Margaret Corbin settled in New York stat near what is presently West Point Military Academy. In her later years, she was fondly known as “Captain Molly” and cherished as a living relic of the Revolutionary War.²³ Her heroic act at Fort Washington earned her recognition by Congress and a pension to offset the disability she developed in service during the Revolution and eventually her remains were buried at West Point with military honors.²⁴ It is the same bravery and service to country that distinguishes her as an extraordinary woman in deserving of a commemorative postage stamp.

MARY LUDWIG HAYS

Most accounts of “Molly Pitcher” place her at the Battle of Monmouth. Because of this, most arrows point to Mary Ludwig Hays as the real “Molly Pitcher”. Mary Ludwig was born on October 13, 1744 as listed on her grave marker.²⁵ She married John Hays in 1769 and joined him with Captain Francis Proctor’s company in the Pennsylvania Artillery.²⁶ Much of the confusion

²² Sharon Creeden, *In Full Bloom: Tales of Women in Their Prime*. (Little Rock, Arkansas: 1999), 88.

²³ Diamant, 113.

²⁴ United States Military Academy at West Point, “Who is Margaret Corbin?” *About Us*. <https://www.usma.edu/corbin/SitePages/Who%20is%20Margaret%20Corbin.aspx>, accessed November 10, 2017.

²⁵ Author visited the grave site personally and photographed the inscription on the plaque.

²⁶ Teipe, “Will the Real Molly Pitcher Please Stand Up?”

about who the real “Molly Pitcher” was comes from the fact that the two strongest contenders, Margaret Corbin and Mary Ludwig Hays were active in the same Pennsylvania regiment.

On June 28, 1778 at the Battle of Monmouth, her Husband John Hays was either wounded by enemy fire or fell ill of a heat stroke. Mary’s primary role of supplying battle fatigued and wounded men with drinking water earned her the nickname of “Molly Pitcher.” When her husband fell ill or was injured, though, she took his place at the Cannon. She fired with skill and courage at the enemy forces. Her bravery was documented by a Private Joseph Plumb Martin who kept a war diary. He described the acts of Ms. Hays firing her fallen husband’s cannon as a “woman whose husband belonged to the artillery...in the act of reaching a cartridge... a cannon shot from the enemy passed directly between her legs.” Plumb Martin then describes her circumstance as “that it was lucky it did not pass a little higher.”²⁷

Mary Ludwig Hays returned to Carlisle, Pennsylvania with her wounded Husband after the battle. Her husband died shortly after their return and she remarried George McCauley. They remained married until January 1832 when she passed at the age of 88. Her plot as mentioned previously is located at the Old Graveyard in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Nearly 800 war veterans lie within the walls of the Old Graveyard including officers as well as enlisted men and women from

**Figure 4:
Monument of
Molly Pitcher at
the Old Graveyard
in Carlisle, PA**



²⁷ James Kirby Martin, ed. *Ordinary Courage: The Revolutionary War Adventures of Joseph Plumb Martin*, (Windham, NY: Brandywine Press, 1993), 80.

all branches of service according to a plaque outside the gate²⁸. In the middle of the graves is erected a monument over the remains of Mary Ludwig Hays as pictured in Figure 4.²⁹

The account of Mary Hays and her engagement in cannon fire and combat evolved into the heroic story many have heard about “Molly Pitcher” and in most minds, canonizes her as the real “Molly Pitcher.” But then the stories of Margaret Corbin also echo as similar accounts to those of Mary Hays. There may never be a true answer as to who earned the nickname if not both extraordinary and courageous women.

UNDERCOVER SOLDIERS

*“We marched together for these twelve long years
And absolutely had no clue that Mulan was a girl!
The male hare wildly kicks his feet;
The female hare has shifty eyes,
But when a pair of hares runs side by side,
Who can distinguish whether I in fact am male or female?”*

Anonymous³⁰

The 1998 animated film *Mulan* told the story of a young, beautiful woman who joined the army in her father’s stead. The film gained a lot of attention, perhaps due to its colorful animation and catchy music, but the poem that inspired it lies in the shadow. Written by an unknown author in the *Collected Works of the Music Bureau*, the “Poem of Mulan” as quoted

²⁸ Author personally visited the graveyard.

²⁹ Photograph Taken by Corey E. Summers, November 4, 2017.

³⁰ Shiamin Kwa and Wit L. Idema, eds. *Mulan: Five Versions of a Classic Chinese Legend with Related Texts* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2010) 3.

above embarks on a much more metaphorical journey in the telling of the Mulan's tale. The poem reveals a priceless lesson in that despite biological differences, in the case of the hares, when they are in action, there is no distinguishing which is male, and which is female.

The storyline from Mulan may be a Chinese fable, but actual instances of women dressing as men to fight in a war occurred during much of world history especially during the American Revolutionary war when it was, of course, unlikely for a female to serve in any capacity other than a camp follower, or "Molly Pitcher". Many of these instances were documented, but two women who truly made a long lasting and extraordinary impact on the war and its history are Elizabeth 'Betty' Zane, who played a part in protecting Fort Henry from British siege and Deborah Sampson, a young lady who portrayed herself as a young man to the American Army in October of 1778.

DEBORAH SAMPSON GANNETT

Just as an abundance of other war women, Deborah Sampson was born into a poor family in Plymouth County, Massachusetts in or around 1760.³¹ She was the oldest of three daughters and three sons of Jonathan and Deborah Sampson. In despair of how little he and his family had, Johnathan Sampson abandoned his family. Due to the lack of resources, the children were split among relatives. Her upbringing and feminine strength is due to the home to which she was eventually sent.

Jeremiah Thomas took in the ten-year-old Deborah Sampson and provided a home for her to flourish into a strong, intelligent, domesticated young woman. Once she turned eighteen, she left the Thomas household and taught school for a few months. She then became a member of

³¹ Diamant, 35.

the Third Baptist Church of Middleborough in Middleborough, Massachusetts where she was later excommunicated for dressing in men's clothes and enlisting as a soldier in the Army.³²

Deborah did in fact do so when she enlisted in the Continental Army in April of 1781. According to her Pension Application, she served as a soldier under the name of Robert Shurtleff during the Revolutionary War for upwards of two years. She served as Robert Shurtleff in Massachusetts and New York until she was discharged honorably in November of 1783. She writes in third person on her petition for pension, "During the time of her service, she was at the capture of Lord Cornwallis [at Yorktown VA, 19 Oct 1781]- was wounded at Tarrytown [30 August 1779 or 15 July 1781]"³³

Deborah Sampson's extraordinary contribution to the war and to the history of the United States is not simply in dressing as a man, but it is in her service as a woman, the eventual legalities that would surround her pension application, and her public speaking. Her husband, after her death, a widower petitioned as the legal heir to her pension to the Committee on Revolutionary Pensions. The committee and congress at the time acknowledge that "The committee is aware that there is no act of Congress which provides for any case like the present."³⁴

After retirement from the military, Deborah Sampson Gannett began delivering speeches about her wartime experience. She traveled throughout New England and New York again, but this time in conventional dress rather than a uniform. The speech circuit first began relating to a book written in 1797 called *The Female Review: Life of Deborah Sampson, the Female Soldier*

³² Pauline Moody, "Deborah Sampson" *Sharon, Massachusetts—A History* (Mansfield, Massachusetts: Blue Mustang Press, 1975)

³³ C. Leon Harris, "Pension Application of Deborah Sampson Gannett S32722" (September 14, 1818)

³⁴ Representative No. 159, House of Representatives, Committee on Revolutionary Pensions, *Benjamin Gannett* 25th Congress, 2d session., (December 22, 1837).

in the War of Revolution. Deborah Sampson's contribution to the history of the United States was not only serving, but having the wherewithal to then deliver speeches on the topic, and later petition for a pension from the Government.

ELIZABETH 'BETTY' ZANE

As to avoid confusion, Betty Zane did not dress up as a man as Deborah Sampson and the fabled Mulan did. What she did share with the other two characters was a belief that her skills and abilities during war time were just as sufficient as a man's and that her gender should not prohibit her from serving. The details of Ms. Zane's life are clouded with myth and interpretation. Her life started in approximately 1766 and lasted until about 1831. She was born in present day West Virginia to Irish immigrants.

During the American Revolution, Fort Henry, located in Wheeling, West Virginia saw two attacks by natives. Given her family ties to the area, Betty Zane was present for an attack in 1782. Betty, who was staying with her brother guarded his home and the remaining gun powder supply. It was then that Betty received word that the supply was getting dangerously low at Fort Henry and volunteered to replenish the supply. When told that a man could run faster than her, Betty Zane is rumored to have responded, "You have not a man to spare!"³⁵ She darted from her brother's home to the Fort back to her brother's home thus saving the fort. Betty, a "heroic and single-hearted female" changed the outcome of the siege on Fort Henry and "saved the inmates of Colonel Zane's house from certain destruction."³⁶ It is said that their ammunition "had been

³⁵ "Unveiling of Memorial to Elizabeth Zane" *Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society Quarterly*, (July 1928), 594.

³⁶ "Unveiling of Memorial to Elizabeth Zane"

exhausted, and every soul would have fallen a sure prey to the fury of the savages, had not a supply been obtained.”³⁷

There are several versions of Betty Zane’s heroism. Some versions have her sprinting from the fort to the Colonel’s house, while others have her sprinting from the home to the fort. Both versions of the story are featured in a piece published in the Ohio State Archeological and Historical Society Quarterly in July 1928. When they were to erect a memorial to Elizabeth Zane, her story was put into written form in this quarterly.³⁸ Also contained in the piece accompanying the memorial are all the variations of who Betty Zane was and the other players in the story. There is little more known about Betty Zane other than what is featured in the Ohio Quarterly.

Both Betty Zane and Deborah Sampson’s stories share aspects with the Chinese fable, Mulan. Betty Zane recognized that amid crisis, her femininity had nothing to do with her ability to run quickly between two points. Deborah Sampson, more literally, embodied the tale by dressing in men’s clothing and adopting a traditionally male name to serve in the Army. These two women did not let gender dictate how and when they would serve their cause and that is what makes them extraordinary contributors to the history of the United States of America and deserving of a commemorative postage stamp.

SPIES AND REBELS

Since many women were not as athletic as Betty Zane, or as quick to take up arms as Margaret Corbin, many of the female contributors to the American revolution found themselves

³⁷ “Unveiling of Memorial to Elizabeth Zane” *Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society Quarterly*, (July 1928), 594

³⁸ Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, 592-598.

as bell ringers, spies, and rebels. This means that a lot of women stayed to themselves and their homes, yet still felt the pulse of revolution and wanted to contribute. Many had children, so they could not join their husbands at camp, some were only children themselves, and others blended in well as Quakers and therefore neutral to the cause and found it beneficial to smuggle information to the rebel forces.

SYBIL LUDINGTON

Sybil Ludington was featured on a stamp for the nation's bicentennial as part of the *Contributors to the Cause* series. She, along with four other notable colonists are featured in Figure 5. Playfully named the “youthful heroine.”³⁹ Sybil Ludington was born in 1761 in Putnam County New York, was the daughter of Captain Henry Ludington and at the age of 16, she became a Revolutionary war hero.

On a cool, dark night, sixteen-year Sybil mounted her horse and rode along the roads of her home county in New York with a mission to wake militia men to tell them of news her father had received. Captain Henry Ludington had received word that Danbury, Connecticut, would need reinforcement troops. Sybil had a mission like that of the famed Paul Revere to ride through the night alerting all that would listen that the British were to attack Danbury. Thanks to Captain Ludington and Sybil, the Putnam County Militia came to the aid of Danbury Connecticut. The British forces could push through



Figure 5: 1975 *Contributors to the Cause* Bicentennial Stamp Set

³⁹ Stamps were digitized by the author, Corey E. Summers.

enough to destroy a weapons depot, but with the help of the Putnam militia, the British were driven from Danbury.⁴⁰

Sybil was given what many women were during this revolutionary time; basic domestic skills and a task of pleasing everyone around her. Perhaps she was fulfilling that task but what makes her so special is that on that dark night in April 1777, at only sixteen years old, she rode alone across lands she may have only seen in passing and alerted the Connecticut country side of the need for more troops to stop the British forces. Sybil, truly a youthful heroine, exhibited bravery at such an early age. It is her bravery and quick thinking that distinguishes her as an extraordinary woman for her time and has made a lasting impact on the history of the United States.

LYDIA DARRAGH

A few months after Sybil's midnight ride, in December of 1777, the British had sieged Philadelphia, forcing Washington and his command out of the city and into surrounding towns. Sir William Howe, British Commander occupied a residence right next to a Quaker couple, William and Lydia Darragh. The British commander forcibly suggested that the Darraghs leave a room ready in their home in the case of a military staff meeting.⁴¹ The Darraghs reluctantly agreed; it was either agree or be removed from their home with two small children.

The British would make use of the room in the Darragh residence and the selfishness of British General Howe blinded him from realizing that Lydia's son was among the troops stationed with General Washington. Because the Darraghs were of the Society of Friends

⁴⁰ Berkin, 139

⁴¹ Berkin, 139.

(Quakers), they were forbidden from taking sides during the Revolution.⁴² Knowing, though of the potential danger her son may be in, she acted. That night, without Howe's knowledge or expectation, Lydia pressed her ear to the door and overheard of a plan to attack Washington's troops in just two short days.

Lydia kept up appearances once she returned to her bedroom with the information floating in her head and the British officers departed. There was only one factor that stopped Lydia from delivering the intelligence right away. The British held down the city of Philadelphia rather tightly. It was far from easy for anyone to get in and much less easy for anyone to get out. Lydia knew her unique position and that she appeared to be if not a loyalist, at least a neutral civilian. She petitioned General Howe himself to go out to a nearby village for flour; he granted her petition.⁴³

Mrs. Darragh then set out on foot to warn Washington's troops of the eminent attack. On her journey, she met up with a rebel soldier and relayed the information to deliver to General Washington.⁴⁴ Lydia's actions changed the outcome of the war immensely because Washington and his troops, upon learning of the British plan, armed themselves and waited in secret for the attack.⁴⁵ The surprise attack was anything but a surprise and the American forces were spared a bloody loss. In her actions, Lydia Darragh made an exceptional and long-lasting contribution to the history of the Revolutionary War and of the United States. If she hadn't risked her life and the safety of her children by defying the controlling General Howe,

⁴² Creeden, 125.

⁴³ Berkin, 140.

⁴⁴ Roberts, *Founding Mothers* 81.

⁴⁵ Diamant, 113

Washington and his troops may have been caught off guard and perhaps Washington himself could have perished.

NANCY HART

Throughout her ninety-five-year life, Nancy Hart, lived a life of a typical revolutionary woman. She witnessed that often, the home front was just as hazardous, if not more, than the battle front. Learning to wield a weapon, Nancy prepared herself to defend her family and her home. She was vulgar, sturdy, and entirely ignorant to convention and manners but she supported the cause, and was ardently patriotic.⁴⁶ There are many stories of women defending their homes, but none that are so quick tempered and reactionary as the story relayed by Elizabeth Ellet in the 1848, *Women of the American Revolution*.

The story goes, Nancy Hart was well known to Royalists, or American colonists who opposed secession from the crown. One day on their way through the unsettled land in Georgia, five Royalists stopped to visit with Ms. Nancy Hart. They confronted her about a story that she had helped a rebel escape the pursuit of British King's men. She admitted to aiding the patriot making no effort to disguise her annoyance with the men. Oddly displeased with her candor, they let the topic die and demanded that she cook them food. Nancy shot words back that she would never feed King's men or traitors if she could help it; she had to save what food was left to feed her own family except one turkey.

One of the men then shot the turkey dead and demanded that she cook it. She did not passively go into the kitchen to obey them, she paced and swore, and paced some more.

⁴⁶ Diamant, 188

Eventually seeing no other way to get the men to leave, Nancy cooked the turkey. As it was cooking, she instructed her young daughter to go out to the spring to fetch water, but also to blow an emergency conch to alert Mr. Hart that there were royalists in the home. While waiting for the turkey to cook, the five men sat around the table and drank until they were loud and jolly. While the men were distracted in their own drunkenness, Nancy smuggled their muskets outside the home one by one. She could get two of them out and in the act of removing the third, she was caught. It was then that trouble began, and she held the men at gunpoint. She threatened to kill the first man to approach her, and in disbelief one lunged toward her. He was shot dead by Ms. Nancy Hart.

Now down to four, the men decided to rush Ms. Hart to seize the musket, but she shot again and wounded another man. At this point in the conflict, Nancy Hart's temper was boiling and when her husband arrived, she reportedly exclaimed "shooting is too good for you." Instead, she took the remaining four men to a tree down her yard and hung all five of them. When Ms. Ellet, Nancy Hart's story teller went to see the hanging tree, a neighbor remarked, "Poor Nancy! She was a honey of a Patriot, but the devil of a wife."⁴⁷

Nancy Hart is not only written in history as being a strong, independent woman not afraid of a musket, but her actions make her an extraordinary character in the history of the United States. Her story is only one in the abundance of others like it across the American frontier lands during the Revolutionary War. It is also a reflection of how passionately many patriots served

⁴⁷ This story is taken from Lincoln Diamant's Revised Edition of Elizabeth Ellet's' *Women of the American Revolution*, 188-190.

their country. History is indebted to Elizabeth Ellet for recording this story so that more can be learned about what it was like to live on the edge of the frontier as a patriot.

PIONEERS

The American Revolutionary War gave way for a new nation. With that new nation came a decade, a century even, of first. Some of the firsts were seen in the realm of science, and a lot of firsts came from legislation. Even today, there are still firsts in court decisions, society, and medicine. A lot of history is a telling of firsts, and a lot of history is a telling of firsts by men. Not all pioneers, though, were men and not all of them were first in doing something. Some pioneers were women attempting to do something in another way. Women such as Penelope Barker, the organizer of the Edenton Tea Party, Phillis Wheatley, the first African American poet, and Esther DeBerdt Reed, Leader of the Ladies of Philadelphia, the Largest Woman's organization during the American Revolution were pioneers of their era.

PENELOPE BARKER

The Boston Tea party lives in history as a bold protest of the British tea tax and "taxation without representation" as put so eloquently by James Otis. In North Carolina, a less known tea party was organized as well. The differences are that in Edenton, North Carolina, the citizens did not discard or dump any tea and the organizer of the Edenton Tea Party was a woman, Penelope Barker. The participants of the Edenton Tea Party were all women making it the earliest women's organized protest in the history of the United States.

Penelope Pagett, born in North Carolina in 1728, to a prominent family. Her father was a planter and doctor. While finances seemed to be secure for Penelope, emotional distress began when her father and sister, mother of two, died and Penelope became mother to her sister's two children and keeper of their family home.⁴⁸ Not only did she fill the place of her sister as mother to her two children, but she married her now widowed brother-in-law, John Hodges. He died when she was pregnant with their second child leaving her with four young children to raise on her own. Still, now widowed and raising a family her finances were in great order. She inherited her husband's land as well as her preexisting wealth from her father. She was rich, beautiful and young and had no shortage of suiters.⁴⁹ She married again in 1752 and was widowed yet again two years later leaving her even more wealthy. She married one more time, Thomas Barker.

Her marital history may have enhanced her abilities to operate sufficiently completely independent of a man. While her husband Thomas was in London serving as the North Carolina colony agent, she managed the family and home and grew increasingly interested in the politics stirring up in the Colonies. She lived in a time, though, where women did not openly engage in politics, so she held a tea party instead not to raise any suspicion. She spoke to a group of women and reportedly said "Maybe it has only been men who have protested the king up to now."⁵⁰ She insisted that "that only means we women have taken too long to let our voices be heard."⁵¹ In comparison to the Boston Tea Party, she announced, "We are signing our names to a document,

⁴⁸ Donna Campbell Smith, "Penelope Barker: First American Woman Political Activist" *HubPages* (February 22, 2014): <https://hubpages.com/education/Penelope-Barker-and-the-Edenton-Tea-Party>, accessed November 5, 2017.

⁴⁹ Smith, "Penelope Parker"

⁵⁰ Diane Silcox-Jarret, "Penelope Barker, Leader of the Edenton Tea Party" *Heroines of the American Revolution, America's Founding Mothers* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: Green Angle Press, 1998), 17.

⁵¹ Silcox-Jarret, 17.

not hiding ourselves behind costumes like the men in Boston did at their tea party. The British will know who we are.”⁵²

The proclamation boycotting British Tea and British textiles was published in London newspapers. The fifty-one women in Edenton were ridiculed and mocked for their attempt, but most hurtfully laughed off. Until other women in the colonies followed Edenton’s lead and began boycotting as well.⁵³ What was before a matter of a few to the crown now became a larger problem. The lasting impact Penelope had on American history by organizing the Edenton Tea Party was advancing that women had just as much power to affect change as men did. She and the other signers of the proclamation advanced women’s rights. These efforts distinguish Ms. Barker as an extraordinary player in the history of the United States and warrants a commemorative stamp.

PHILLIS WHEATLEY

Born sometime around 1753, Phillis Wheatley came to Boston on a slave ship from Africa in 1761. She was most likely born in Gambia but because of the lack of records taken about slave’s lives, there is only speculation. She was a slave to the Wheatley family but grew up much more like a daughter than a slave. She received an education from her master and the children. She learned languages, but most importantly she learned to read and write. Her life became an anomaly. Phillis, now a Wheatley, published her very first poem in 1767 only six years after being enslaved and brought to the United States.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Penelope Barker House Welcome Center, “Penelope Barker: Mother of Women’s Political Liberation” <http://ehcnc.org/people/penelope-barker>, accessed November 5, 2017.

In 1773, she wrote her first book of verse titled *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*. Due to her unusual status as an African slave, she had to include a preface in the book in which men including John Hancock asserted that she had written the poems and not some other author.⁵⁴

When the war broke out, she wrote several tributes to the American Patriots, including a 1776 tribute to George Washington that he responded to with an invitation for her to visit his Cambridge camp and her poem “Liberty and Peace” celebrated the coming end of the American revolution.⁵⁵ The lasting impact of Phillis Wheatley’s accomplishments are simple in that she led a life totally opposite of what most American colonists expected from a slave. Many held a belief that African slaves were illiterate, inferior, and incapable of intellectual achievement. She defied this standard and her poems were attested to by little less than twenty prominent New England men. Additionally, she made an extraordinary contribution to the History of the United States as being the first African American poet.

ESTHER DEBERDT REED

In 1780 Philadelphia, the largest domestic fund-raising campaign of the Revolutionary War was started with a simple publication, *Sentiments of an American Woman*.⁵⁶ The author, Ms. Esther DeBerdT Reed, a Philadelphia woman herself and wife of the Pennsylvania Governor, called women across Pennsylvania to come forward with domestic donations.⁵⁷ The plan was

⁵⁴ Phillis Wheatley, “Preface” *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral* (1773): <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/409/pg409-images.html>, accessed November 1, 2017

⁵⁵ Phillis Wheatley, *Liberty and Peace* (Boston MA: Warden and Russell, 1784).

⁵⁶ Esther DeBerdT Reed, *Sentiments of an American Woman* (Philadelphia: John Dunlap, 1780) Rare Book And Special Collections Division, Library of Congress.

⁵⁷ Berkin, 45.

ambitious, but much called for. The war was depriving the American troops of necessity and efficiency.

In *Sentiments of an American Woman*, Esther DeBerdt Reed writes, “Our ambition is kindled by the same of those heroines of antiquity” referring to the many women who have come before her and fought physically and emotionally the war alongside men. She continues about the women, “who have rendered their sex illustrious, and have proved to the universe, that, if the weakness of our Constitution, if opinion and manners did not forbid us to march to glory by the same paths as the Men, we should at least equal, and sometimes surpass them in our love for the public good.”⁵⁸ The call for action on Esther’s part sparked a large outpouring of support. Many women of wealth or status joined in the effort.

The lasting impact of Esther DeBerdt Reeds efforts is like that of Penelope Barker in that she promoted the effectiveness of woman across the colonies and advanced the rights of women to participate in national affairs outside of the home. The revolution bred extraordinary women who made lasting impacts on the history of the United States and Ms. DeBerdt Reed is no exception. Her contributions, like many, changed the course of women’s history forever.

⁵⁸ Esther DeBerdt Reed, *Sentiments of an American Woman*.

Conclusion

With the fire of a new feminist movement brought on by the Women's March on DC in January 2017 and the opening of the National Women's History museum, interest in Women's history has flourished. There has been a standing interest, however, in the history of Women during the American Revolution. This interest started with Elizabeth Ellet's landmark three-volume work, *Women of the American Revolution*. Ellet is indeed not the first female historian, rather she was the one of the first historians to focus in on women's history.

Stemming from Ellet's research, many other historians have dabbled in the subject writing histories of revolutionary women, but no author or historian other than a few reference materials have been able to lay women of all different classes, upbringing, geographical location, and even race. In this project, women of all creeds, color, and class are in the most graphic way possible put onto the same page. Supporting research has allowed women like Martha Washington to be placed on a stamp set next to 16-year old Sybil Ludington. This is proof of the overarching nature of this project and its intention to fill the gap in the preexisting literature.

The topic of Revolutionary heroines could benefit greatly from an extension of research into their upbringings and other elements of their lives. If the Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee should decide not to adopt the stamp set, there could be more attempts made. In further attempts, research can be more focused in on a certain geographical area or perhaps of women of a certain class.

A stamp set featuring fourteen different women, all who have made incomparable contributions to the History of the United States is bound to be an interest to not only stamp collectors but to the public who will enjoy seeing the friendly faces of familiar stories as customers of the United States Postal System

Appendix A: CSAC Approval Criteria

To recommend a stamp set subject to the Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee (CSAC), there is a set of eleven requirements that the subject must meet. The following requirements are published and available to the public via the world wide web at URL [<https://about.usps.com/who-we-are/csac/criteria.htm>]

1. U.S. postage stamps and stationery will primarily feature American or American-related subjects. Other subjects may be considered if the subject had significant impact on American history, culture or environment.
2. The Postal Service will honor extraordinary and enduring contributions to American society, history, culture or environment.
3. U.S. stamp programs are planned and developed two to three years in advance. In order to be considered, subject matter suggestions should be submitted three or more years in advance of the proposed stamp.
4. Living people will not be considered at the present time. Beginning in 2018, proposals for a deceased individual will be considered three years following his/her death.
5. A memorial stamp will be issued honoring U.S. presidents after they are deceased.
6. Events of historical significance shall be considered for commemoration on anniversaries in multiples of 50 years.
7. A balance of stamp subjects that includes themes of widespread national appeal and significance will be considered for commemoration. Official postal cancellations, which may be arranged through the local postmaster, may be requested for significant local events or commemorations.
8. Commemorative postage stamps will be issued at intervals of 50 years from the date of the state's first entry into the Union.
9. The stamp program commemorates positive contributions to American life, history, culture and environment; therefore, negative occurrences and disasters will not be commemorated on U.S. postage stamps or stationery.
10. Due to the limitations placed on annual postal programs and the vast number of locales, organizations and institutions in existence, it would be difficult to single out any one of the following for commemoration: government agencies, localities, non-profit organizations, associations, and similar entities. Stamps or stationery items will not be issued to honor religious institutions or individuals whose principal achievements are

associated with religious undertakings or beliefs. However, these subjects may be recognized with commemorative postmarks.

11. Stamps may be issued for the five active-duty branches – Air Force, Army, Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard. This includes Reserve/Guard components of the current organizational structure. Stamps for the major service academies will be considered on a case-by-case basis for 50-year anniversaries (or multiples thereof).

Appendix: Full Formal Application

Corey Elizabeth Summers
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Harrisburg PA 17112



Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW, Room 3300
Washington D.C. 20260-3501

Corey Elizabeth Summers
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Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee

471 L'Enfant Plaza SW, Room 3300

Washington, DC 20260-3501

Re: Stamp Set Proposal

November 5, 2017

Distinguished members,

I would like to first introduce myself as a student. I am currently working towards my Masters in History from Southern New Hampshire University. For my Master's thesis/capstone, I have researched and written about fourteen different women during the Revolutionary War that made extraordinary and long-lasting contributions to the History of the United States to suggest to this committee for a stamp set. I am writing today to formally submit a stamp suggestion and extensive research to support said suggestion. Attached also is suggested artwork to supplement the proposal and your understanding. The artwork is included merely as a supplement and it is understood that artwork will not be reviewed or considered.

Revolution is a term globally recognized and throughout the earth's history, there have been countless social endeavors classified as revolutions. Some revolutions result in social justice, some result in the birth of a nation; on the eve of the 19th century in North America, a revolution of the latter took place. The American Revolution gave way to the formation of a new nation and a history of the United States of America began. In American and much of world history, many of the details are dominated with male driven successes, stories of male heroes, and a presidential history of all male leaders.

The revolutionary war and its history has been studied and taught for over two hundred years and during these two hundred plus years, the narrative has narrowed in on men, The Founding Fathers. However, any narrowing of information is damaging to the character of the

entire era. It is for this reason, one should ask *were all the founders fathers; or were some of those that made an impact on the revolution mothers and daughters too?*

Although abundantly studied in academics, a public involvement in the study and commemoration of female revolutionaries is a pioneer endeavor. One of the most commemorative actions the nation can take is putting remarkable women on postage stamp that can be seen and used across the United States. The Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee (CSAC) was formed with the expectation impactful people, places, and things may be commemorated as the nation should see fit. Through evidence and ideas, it is evident that a stamp set about revolutionary era women is a serious contender for become the next major collectable commemorative set.

RESEARCH

The following women, after extensive research, have been determined to have made an extraordinary contribution that is long lasting in American history.

First Ladies: *Martha Washington & Abigail Adams*

Famous Relatives: *Jane Mecom Franklin & Elizabeth Hamilton*

Molly Pitchers: *Margaret Corbin & Mary Ludwig Hays*

Undercover Soldiers: *Betty Zane & Deborah Sampson*

Spies and Rebels: *Sybil Ludington, Lydia Darragh & Nancy Hart*

Pioneers: *Penelope Barker, Phillis Wheatley, & Penelope Barker.*

The fourteen women have been given labels of sorts and been placed into sections of similar characters or commonalities. Regardless of the wait or work, to promote the idea that women were just as influential before, during, and after the American Revolution as men will prove to be worth every step.

FIRST LADIES

MARTHA WASHINGTON

As First Lady, Martha Washington set precedent with every step she took. She was the first First Lady and her example would be followed by every other First Lady down the line. She set a tone of elegance; the tone was enough to be taken seriously by European

diplomats, yet open and *American* to match the tone of the new nation. ¹ Beloved by the troops as much as her husband, Martha Washington was truly a mother to the new nation.

Martha Dandridge was born on June 2, 1731 in Virginia. She was the oldest of eight children. The Dandridge family was of moderate means, by no mean wealthy. Yet, Martha and her siblings grew up learning the nuances of a wealthy status. At age eighteen, Martha Dandridge married Daniel Parke Custis. The Custis family had an exceptional amount of wealth leaving Martha and Daniel without want or desire. Eight years into their marriage, Martha became a widow and heir to a sizeable estate. It is no wonder, that her status and beauty would attract a young George Washington.

At the time of their courting, George was commander of the Virginia Force in the French and Indian War. George and Martha were married in 1759 and began life together at Mount Vernon, Washington's plantation along the Potomac River. Martha assumed full management of Mount Vernon and created a warm and inviting compound for which it is famous. The increasing tension in 1775 led to General Washington to be chosen as the commander of the American forces against Great Britain. While George Washington made his own history throughout his military achievements, Martha was making her mark too.

Her extraordinary contribution to the war is reflected in the admiration she received from the soldiers that fought alongside her husband. Despite her upbringing and poised attitude, Martha Washington never feared battle. She joined her husband, first, at his headquarters in Cambridge, MA in December of 1775. Her companionship to George did not cease in Cambridge, rather she followed him to Valley Forge, PA, Newburgh, N.Y, and in 1778, at the Battle of Monmouth. 'Lady' Washington arrived to meet her husband and her presence at the battle was recorded first hand in the form of a ballad, by a seemingly unknown author.

The ballad, on its face, is the opposite of female strength and heroism; celebrating the heroism of a woman's husband, Martha's George. It isn't until the fourth and fifth verses quoted above the severity of the situation Martha Washington was walking into is magnified. It is not her dedication to her husband that makes her a true hero in the War, it is not her blind love that is the extraordinary contribution to American History. Rather, it is the bravery in entering an active war zone and remaining pleasant and calm. Not only was her face calming and reassuring to the tired soldiers but she along with the *Ladies of Philadelphia* organized by Ms. Esther DeBerdt Reed contributed material goods to the soldiers. ²

General Washington and his troops, while stationed in Cambridge just outside Boston Massachusetts, was joined yet again by his loving Martha. She wrote some

¹ Cokie Roberts, *Ladies of Liberty: The Women Who Shaped Our Nation*. (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 2008), 11.

² *Portrait of Martha Dandridge Washington*, circa 1800-1825. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution.

correspondence while in Cambridge and commented on the progress of the war to loved ones. In a letter dated, January 31, 1776 Martha first scolds her sister for not writing sooner and more often, but then details the concern over the whereabouts of British Commander-in-chief, General Clinton. She does boast of the American troops' progression by writing, "I suppose they will be glad for a place where they may have more room as they cannot get out anyway here but by water."³ She, of course, was referring to the Boston area and the Boston Harbor. She continues, "our navy has been very successful in taking their vessels two was taken last week loaded with coles and potatoes wines & several other articles for the use of the troops." Her proven presence at the camps is evidence of her dedication to the Revolutionary cause and the success of the new nation.

Martha Washington was cherished by troops and the nation just as much as her husband was. The arrival of Martha Washington and other General's wives inspired fortitude in the troops.⁴ Her southern grace added to her revolutionary bravery and dedication made Martha Washington an extraordinary woman and suitable first First Lady of the United States of America.

ABIGAIL ADAMS

Successor as First Lady, the bold New Englander, Abigail Smith Adams, did not have the same financial advantages, nor did it seem she had any interest in being as quiet and polite as her predecessor. Despite being less poised and naturally wealthy, Mrs. Adams was a host in herself and consistently proving herself to be more of a partner than a wife to the second president, Mr. John Adams. In a portrait completed in 1754 by artist Benjamin Blyth, her character is reflected not by beautiful features.⁵ Instead, Blyth captured her rough features reflecting a strong, poised, and resourceful character as shown in Figure 3.

Born in Weymouth Massachusetts in 1744, Abigail Smith was raised in a distinguished New England family. Despite their distinction, though, Abigail was brought up in a simple, rural neighborhood with little access to formal instruction. After learning the value of education and experiencing much of the world for herself, she wrote in 1817, "I never was sent to any school. I was always sick. Female education in the best families went no further than writing and

³ Martha Washington, "Letter to Anna Maria Bassett, January 31, 1776." In Joseph E. Fields. *Worthy Partner: The Papers of Martha Washington*. (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1994)

⁴ Lonelle Aikman, "Patriots in Petticoats," *National Geographic* Vol 49, No. 4 (October 1975): 480.

⁵ Benjamin Blythe, *Abigail (Smith) Adams* 1754, Online Collection, Massachusetts Historical Society. https://www.masshist.org/database/viewer.php?item_id=69&mode=large&img_step=1&, Accessed November 1, 2017

arithmetic.”⁶ Her lack of education did not prohibit her from become one of the greatest letter writers of all time.

Abigail Smith and John Adams were married in 1764 initiating a fifty-four-year partnership. At only nineteen years old, Abigail was thrust into an exciting life of law, politics, and a distant husband. Before John became a delegate and left Abigail to take care of house and home, they had five children, perhaps the most famous of the five, John Quincy the sixth President of the United States. The five children were all born between 1765 and 1775, the ten years during which most of the tensions with Great Britain were the highest. The hardships of war left many women across the colonies widowed or without their husbands for extended periods of time and Abigail and the children were no exception.

It is in the absence of her husband, John, that Abigail truly shines as an extraordinary woman during the Revolutionary era. There are two reasons for which Abigail is given this distinction. The first is her reputation of being an extremely effective farm owner and businesswoman. She bought farm stock, hired help on the farmstead while simultaneously being an attentive mother, landlord, and wife.

Her ability to take care of her family, the family business, and her husband’s affairs all during war with the constant threat of danger hanging over them is one thing that distinguishes Abigail as an extraordinary contributor to the history of the United States, but one other previously alluded to fact equally qualifies her; her letter writing. In an abundance of letters and correspondence, Abigail’s emotions, thoughts, and daily endeavors, are revealed. In this way she was an historian of her own life. The value in her letters goes beyond primary sources, but rather they are perhaps the most concrete evidence of the earliest women’s suffrage sentiments.

In one of the many letters between husband and wife, Abigail starts her writing by admitting a longing she has for her husband, followed by a quick status update of their property and business affairs, then speaks as freely as she can as if her husband were in the same room about the rights of women and the power they ought to have. This letter, written March 31, 1776 is one that is quoted often when discussing women’s rights. Several lines into the letter Abigail writes, “I long to hear that you have declared an independency.”⁷ She, of course, is speaking of the anticipated Declaration of Independence that would come two short months later, but what follows is evidence of her passion for politics. She writes, “—and by the way in the new Code of

⁶ Charles Francis Adams, *Familiar Letters of John Adams and his Wife Abigail Adams, During the Revolution with a Memoir of Mrs. Adams*. (Boston MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1875): xi.

⁷ “Adams Family Correspondence, Volume 1, December 1761–May 1776” *The Adams Papers Digital Edition*, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2008–2017). 370

Laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make I desire you would remember the ladies and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors.”⁸

It is entirely understandable why, so many women’s rights movements have attached to this line of correspondence. The rights of women have been questioned since 1776 as evidenced by Abigail Adams, therefore, it is an important statement for all women’s rights issues. This alone does not qualify as the extraordinary contribution to American History, rather it was her insistence in being a part of her husband’s life, professionally and politically. Abigail Adams can be considered responsible for keeping John Adams’ head level during the presidency and throughout his legislative endeavors.

Abigail Adams, for her commitment to domesticity amidst war time conditions and her political prowess and influence within her marriage to the second President of the United States is considered an extraordinary figure within the history of the United States. Her grace and elegance made her attractive during her life, but it is her honesty and integrity that distinguishes her character well after her death.

FAMOUS LAST NAMES

JANE FRANKLIN MECOM

As the sister of Benjamin Franklin, Jane was a woman who used her maiden name after marriage much like other women who had an important public image prior to marriage that they wanted to preserve. Her brother, Benjamin, had been an extremely well-known figure during the Colonial and Revolutionary eras in the United States and abroad. Benjamin and Jane were extremely affectionate in their letters and developed an inseparable bond over their lives although they spent very little time together in person. Much like other women of the era, Jane Mecom wrote to her brother and over time, collected an abundance of letters to and from Mr. Benjamin Franklin while in France, Philadelphia, England, and nearly everywhere else he had travelled.

Jane, one of seventeen children was born in March 1712. She and her brother, Benjamin, had a typical 16th Century childhood riddled with labor, a lack of education, and economic difficulties. Unlike her brother, her economic status did not change much even after marrying Edward Mecom at age fifteen. She began having children at age seventeen and slipped into the monotony of Colonial American life leaving little behind at her passing other than the letters that were preserved between her brother Benjamin and herself.

Benjamin and Jane could not have led more opposite lives. Benjamin Franklin left their childhood home, learned to read and to write with elegance and poise. He became a

⁸ “Adams Family Correspondence, 370.

distinguished statesman, philosopher, inventor and is famed as one of the most influential figures in the Revolution. Jane, on the other hand never left their home in Boston, never learned to spell, and amounted to a wife, mother, and widow.⁹ While the task of being a wife, mother, and then widow is enough to make a woman extraordinary, Jane's story is about how she perfectly embodied the other side of American history, despite her famous last name and brother.

Jane lived her life with significantly less means and less wealth than her brother, yet she strived to be able to keep up with him intellectually as evidenced in their many letters, but she wrote very little other than her "Book of Ages" which is more of a book of remembrance and a tale of life's beginnings and its ends, a "litany of grief, a history, in brief, of a life lived rags to rags."¹⁰ Regardless of her economic status, her extraordinary quality was that she thirsted for knowledge more than most women of her day, so she read and read until her last breath.

Jane Franklin Mecom's contributions to the Revolution and the History of the United States of America is through the companionship she provided to one of the most influential Founding Fathers. Jane brought Benjamin Franklin boundless joy and offered a lot of her opinions to him, some of which he acted on. When Benjamin Franklin died in 1790, he left his sister Jane the house in which she lived and gave one hundred pounds to the public schools of Boston. Schools at which his sister may have attended had she been born later in the 16th century. Her legacy is much more indirect than the other notable women, but extraordinary nonetheless.

ELIZABETH HAMILTON

Elizabeth Schuyler, second daughter to Revolutionary War General Phillip Schuyler, was born in August of 1757 in Albany New York. Her mother was a model of courage in young Elizabeth's childhood. As the British troops began marching on Saratoga many rebel families fled south for safety. Catherine Schuyler, Elizabeth's mother, drove her wagon towards the troops, in the direction of danger just to burn the wheat fields of her home before any enemy forces could harvest it. Without a doubt, Catherine served as an exceptional example of courage for all her children.¹¹

In Morristown, New Jersey during the winter of 1790, Elizabeth Schuyler met Alexander Hamilton. The two, Elizabeth Schuyler of the distinguished New York Schuylers, and an immigrant new to the revolutionary scene, could not have been more opposite. It was his incessant letter writing that eventually won her over. In a letter written to Elizabeth, Alexander gushes with affection for his Eliza, or Betsey as she is sometimes referred. He writes that even "a

⁹ Jill Lepore, Preface.

¹⁰ Jill Lepore, "Poor Jane's Almanac" *New York Times*, (April 23, 2011), <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/24/opinion/24lepore.html>, accessed November 3, 2017.

¹¹ Roberts, *Ladies of Liberty*, 161.

spirit entering into bliss, heaven opening upon all its faculties, cannot long more ardently for the enjoyment, than I do my darling Betsey, to taste the heaven that awaits me in your bosom.”¹²

The love letters were motivation for Elizabeth to fall for Alexander, but it is her strength and loyalty that made her the perfect companion for him and all his faults. Their own grandson, Allan McLane Hamilton, and author of a biography on the Founding Father on her devotion to her husband wrote, “Had she been any other than what she was, despite all his genius and force of character, Hamilton could never have attained the place he did.”¹³ In the end, the *place* Allan McLane Hamilton refers to was not one of financial stature. It was the fame he attained through his public service as Treasury Secretary. When Hamilton was killed in a duel, he left Elizabeth with very little thrusting her into a life of single motherhood and financial struggles. Friends of the family attempted to assist her. Governor Morris of New York organized a subscription fund among the friends of Hamilton, but given her maiden name, they were under assumptions that her finances were secure.¹⁴ Her father divided the family wealth upon his death among eight children equally, thus leaving very little for Elizabeth and the children.

Despite all the hardship brought on by her Husband’s death and the humiliation while he was living, Elizabeth went on to live an extraordinary 50 years after her husband’s death. In those fifty years, she contributed to the history of the United States by helping to raise funds with New York activist, Isabella Graham to find the Orphan Asylum Society of New York. This would go on to still stand more than 200 years after it is built as a public orphanage for the adolescents of New York City.¹⁵ Additionally, Elizabeth Schuyler Hamilton helped to raise funds for the Washington Monument in DC to pay homage to the man that allowed so much opportunity for her late husband.¹⁶ Her contributions as a widow allow Elizabeth Hamilton to shine on her own, independent of her husband’s accomplishments and distinguishes her as an impactful figure during and after the American Revolutionary Era.

“MOLLY PITCHER”

MARGARET CORBIN

Margaret Cochran was born November 12, 1751 in what is present day Franklin County, Pennsylvania. She was orphaned at five years old when her father was killed, and her

¹² “From Alexander Hamilton to Elizabeth Schuyler 5 October 1780” *Founders Online*, National Archives. <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Hamilton/01-27-02-0001-0003>, accessed November 2, 2017

¹³ Allan McLane Hamilton, *The Intimate Life of Alexander Hamilton: Based Chiefly Upon Original Family Letters and Other Documents, Many of Which Have Never been Published*. (London, UK: Duckworth & Co, 1910), 103.

¹⁴ Ron Chernow, *Alexander Hamilton* (New York, NY: Penguin Group, 2004), 725.

¹⁵ Graham Windham, *History*. <http://www.graham-windham.org/about-us/history>, accessed November 10, 2017.

¹⁶ Roberts. *Founding Mothers* 92.

mother was captured during the Indian raids of 1756.¹⁷ There is very little known about her early childhood. Her marriage to John Corbin began shortly before the fighting in the American Revolution began and was thrust into the life of a camp follower. Camp followers were generally women who joined their husbands in war. The necessity for Women to accompany the militia men comes from a lack of opportunity for childless, young, and property less women. Because Margaret Corbin's marriage to John Corbin was so young, they spent their first few years of marriage in a war zone.

At Fort Washington on Manhattan Island, New York, Margaret Corbin's husband, John, was shot by Hessian soldiers and died immediately. Rather than taking time to mourn the death of her Husband, Margaret, now a widow, jumped into action. She assumed his battle station and kept up the cannon fire and although she was wounded, she stayed her position until the post was surrendered. She was permanently disabled from the encounter and thus eligible not only for a military pension but also appreciation by Congress.¹⁸ In fact, Congress, at the time, recognized her services and resolved to award Corbin one half the monthly pay given to a commissioned soldier.

After the Revolution, Margaret Corbin settled in New York stat near what is presently West Point Military Academy. In her later years, she was fondly known as "Captain Molly" and cherished as a living relic of the Revolutionary War.¹⁹ Her heroic act at Fort Washington earned her recognition by Congress and a pension to offset the disability she developed in service during the Revolution and eventually her remains were buried at West Point with military honors.²⁰ It is the same bravery and service to country that distinguishes her as an extraordinary woman in deserving of a commemorative postage stamp.

MARY LUDWIG HAYS

Most accounts of "Molly Pitcher" place her at the Battle of Monmouth. Because of this, most arrows point to Mary Ludwig Hays as the real "Molly Pitcher". Mary Ludwig was born on October 13, 1744 as listed on her grave marker.²¹ She married John Hays in 1769 and joined him with Captain Francis Proctor's company in the Pennsylvania Artillery.²² Much of the confusion about who the real "Molly Pitcher" was comes from the fact that the two strongest contenders, Margaret Corbin and Mary Ludwig Hays were active in the same Pennsylvania regiment.

¹⁷ New York State Legislature, Assembly, "Dedication of Fort Tyron Tablet" *Documents of the Assembly of the State of New York One Hundred and Thirty- Third Session*, Vol 31. No 65, Part 1, p.454.

¹⁸ Sharon Creeden, *In Full Bloom: Tales of Women in Their Prime*. (Little Rock, Arkansas: 1999), 88.

¹⁹ Diamant, 113.

²⁰ United States Military Academy at West Point, "Who is Margaret Corbin?" *About Us*. <https://www.usma.edu/corbin/SitePages/Who%20is%20Margaret%20Corbin.aspx>, accessed November 10, 2017.

²¹ Author visited the grave site personally and photographed the inscription on the plaque.

²² Teipe, "Will the Real Molly Pitcher Please Stand Up?"

On June 28, 1778 at the Battle of Monmouth, her Husband John Hays was either wounded by enemy fire or fell ill of a heat stroke. Mary's primary role of supplying battle fatigued and wounded men with drinking water earned her the nickname of "Molly Pitcher." When her husband fell ill or was injured, though, she took his place at the Cannon. She fired with skill and courage at the enemy forces. Her bravery was documented by a Private Joseph Plumb Martin who kept a war diary. He described the acts of Ms. Hays firing her fallen husband's cannon as a "woman whose husband belonged to the artillery...in the act of reaching a cartridge... a cannon shot from the enemy passed directly between her legs." Plumb Martin then describes her circumstance as "that it was lucky it did not pass a little higher."²³

Mary Ludwig Hays returned to Carlisle, Pennsylvania with her wounded Husband after the battle. Her husband died shortly after their return and she remarried George McCauley. They remained married until January 1832 when she passed at the age of 88. Her plot as mentioned previously is located at the Old Graveyard in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Nearly 800 war veterans lie within the walls of the Old Graveyard including officers as well as enlisted men and women from all branches of service according to a plaque outside the gate²⁴. In the middle of the graves is erected a monument over the remains of Mary Ludwig Hays as pictured in Figure 4.²⁵

The account of Mary Hays and her engagement in cannon fire and combat evolved into the heroic story many have heard about "Molly Pitcher" and in most minds, canonizes her as the real "Molly Pitcher." But then the stories of Margaret Corbin also echo as similar accounts to those of Mary Hays. There may never be a true answer as to who earned the nickname if not both extraordinary and courageous women.

UNDERCOVER SOLDIERS

DEBORAH SAMPSON GANNETT

Just as an abundance of other war women, Deborah Sampson was born into a poor family in Plymouth County, Massachusetts in or around 1760.²⁶ She was the oldest of three daughters and three sons of Jonathan and Deborah Sampson. In despair of how little he and his family had, Johnathan Sampson abandoned his family. Due to the lack of resources, the children were split among relatives. Her upbringing and feminine strength is due to the home to which she was eventually sent.

Jeremiah Thomas took in the ten-year-old Deborah Sampson and provided a home for her to flourish into a strong, intelligent, domesticated young woman. Once she turned eighteen, she

²³ James Kirby Martin, ed. *Ordinary Courage: The Revolutionary War Adventures of Joseph Plumb Martin*, (Windham, NY: Brandywine Press, 1993), 80.

²⁴ Author personally visited the graveyard.

²⁵ Photograph Taken by Corey E. Summers, November 4, 2017.

²⁶ Diamant, 35.

left the Thomas household and taught school for a few months. She then became a member of the Third Baptist Church of Middleborough in Middleborough, Massachusetts where she was later excommunicated for dressing in men's clothes and enlisting as a soldier in the Army.²⁷

Deborah did in fact do so when she enlisted in the Continental Army in April of 1781. According to her Pension Application, she served as a soldier under the name of Robert Shurtleff during the Revolutionary War for upwards of two years. She served as Robert Shurtleff in Massachusetts and New York until she was discharged honorably in November of 1783. She writes in third person on her petition for pension, "During the time of her service, she was at the capture of Lord Cornwallis [at Yorktown VA, 19 Oct 1781]- was wounded at Tarrytown [30 August 1779 or 15 July 1781]"²⁸

Deborah Sampson's extraordinary contribution to the war and to the history of the United States is not simply in dressing as a man, but it is in her service as a woman, the eventual legalities that would surround her pension application, and her public speaking. Her husband, after her death, a widower petitioned as the legal heir to her pension to the Committee on Revolutionary Pensions. The committee and congress at the time acknowledge that "The committee is aware that there is no act of Congress which provides for any case like the present."²⁹

After retirement from the military, Deborah Sampson Gannett began delivering speeches about her wartime experience. She traveled throughout New England and New York again, but this time in conventional dress rather than a uniform. The speech circuit first began relating to a book written in 1797 called *The Female Review: Life of Deborah Sampson, the Female Soldier in the War of Revolution*. Deborah Sampson's contribution to the history of the United States was not only serving, but having the wherewithal to then deliver speeches on the topic, and later petition for a pension from the Government.

ELIZABETH 'BETTY' ZANE

As to avoid confusion, Betty Zane did not dress up as a man as Deborah Sampson and the fabled Mulan did. What she did share with the other two characters was a belief that her skills and abilities during war time were just as sufficient as a man's and that her gender should not prohibit her from serving. The details of Ms. Zane's life are clouded with myth and interpretation. Her life started in approximately 1766 and lasted until about 1831. She was born in present day West Virginia to Irish immigrants.

²⁷ Pauline Moody, "Deborah Sampson" *Sharon, Massachusetts—A History* (Mansfield, Massachusetts: Blue Mustang Press, 1975)

²⁸ C. Leon Harris, "Pension Application of Deborah Sampson Gannett S32722" (September 14, 1818)

²⁹ Representative No. 159, House of Representatives, Committee on Revolutionary Pensions, *Benjamin Gannett* 25th Congress, 2d session., (December 22, 1837).

During the American Revolution, Fort Henry, located in Wheeling, West Virginia saw two attacks by natives. Given her family ties to the area, Betty Zane was present for an attack in 1782. Betty, who was staying with her brother guarded his home and the remaining gun powder supply. It was then that Betty received word that the supply was getting dangerously low at Fort Henry and volunteered to replenish the supply. When told that a man could run faster than her, Betty Zane is rumored to have responded, “You have not a man to spare!”³⁰ She darted from her brother’s home to the Fort back to her brother’s home thus saving the fort. Betty, a “heroic and single-hearted female” changed the outcome of the siege on Fort Henry and “saved the inmates of Colonel Zane's house from certain destruction.”³¹ It is said that their ammunition “had been exhausted, and every soul would have fallen a sure prey to the fury of the savages, had not a supply been obtained.”³²

There are several versions of Betty Zane’s heroism. Some versions have her sprinting from the fort to the Colonel’s house, while others have her sprinting from the home to the fort. Both versions of the story are featured in a piece published in the Ohio State Archeological and Historical Society Quarterly in July 1928. When they were to erect a memorial to Elizabeth Zane, her story was put into written form in this quarterly.³³ Also contained in the piece accompanying the memorial are all the variations of who Betty Zane was and the other players in the story. There is little more known about Betty Zane other than what is featured in the Ohio Quarterly.

Both Betty Zane and Deborah Sampson’s stories share aspects with the Chinese fable, Mulan. Betty Zane recognized that amid crisis, her femininity had nothing to do with her ability to run quickly between two points. Deborah Sampson, more literally, embodied the tale by dressing in men’s clothing and adopting a traditionally male name to serve in the Army. These two women did not let gender dictate how and when they would serve their cause and that is what makes them extraordinary contributors to the history of the United States of America and deserving of a commemorative postage stamp.

SPIES AND REBELS

SYBIL LUDINGTON

Sybil Ludington was featured on a stamp for the nation’s bicentennial as part of the *Contributors to the Cause* series. She, along with four other notable colonists are featured in

³⁰ “Unveiling of Memorial to Elizabeth Zane” *Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society Quarterly*, (July 1928), 594.

³¹ “Unveiling of Memorial to Elizabeth Zane”

³² “Unveiling of Memorial to Elizabeth Zane” *Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society Quarterly*, (July 1928), 594

³³ Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, 592-598.

Figure 5. Playfully named the “youthful heroine.”³⁴ Sybil Ludington was born in 1761 in Putnam County New York, was the daughter of Captain Henry Ludington and at the age of 16, she became a Revolutionary war hero.

On a cool, dark night, sixteen-year Sybil mounted her horse and rode along the roads of her home county in New York with a mission to wake militia men to tell them of news her father had received. Captain Henry Ludington had received word that Danbury, Connecticut, would need reinforcement troops. Sybil had a mission like that of the famed Paul Revere to ride through the night alerting all that would listen that the British were to attack Danbury. Thanks to Captain Ludington and Sybil, the Putnam County Militia came to the aid of Danbury Connecticut. The British forces could push through enough to destroy a weapons depot, but with the help of the Putnam militia, the British were driven from Danbury.³⁵

Sybil was given what many women were during this revolutionary time; basic domestic skills and a task of pleasing everyone around her. Perhaps she was fulfilling that task but what makes her so special is that on that dark night in April 1777, at only sixteen years old, she rode alone across lands she may have only seen in passing and alerted the Connecticut country side of the need for more troops to stop the British forces. Sybil, truly a youthful heroine, exhibited bravery at such an early age. It is her bravery and quick thinking that distinguishes her as an extraordinary woman for her time and has made a lasting impact on the history of the United States.

LYDIA DARRAGH

A few months after Sybil’s midnight ride, in December of 1777, the British had sieged Philadelphia, forcing Washington and his command out of the city and into surrounding towns. Sir William Howe, British Commander occupied a residence right next to a Quaker couple, William and Lydia Darragh. The British commander forcibly suggested that the Darraghs leave a room ready in their home in the case of a military staff meeting.³⁶ The Darraghs reluctantly agreed; it was either agree or be removed from their home with two small children.

The British would make use of the room in the Darragh residence and the selfishness of British General Howe blinded him from realizing that Lydia’s son was among the troops stationed with General Washington. Because the Darraghs were of the Society of Friends (Quakers), they were forbidden from taking sides during the Revolution.³⁷ Knowing, though of the potential danger her son may be in, she acted. That night, without Howe’s knowledge or

³⁴ Stamps were digitized by the author, Corey E. Summers.

³⁵ Berkin, 139

³⁶ Berkin, 139.

³⁷ Creeden, 125.

expectation, Lydia pressed her ear to the door and overheard of a plan to attack Washington's troops in just two short days.

Lydia kept up appearances once she returned to her bedroom with the information floating in her head and the British officers departed. There was only one factor that stopped Lydia from delivering the intelligence right away. The British held down the city of Philadelphia rather tightly. It was far from easy for anyone to get in and much less easy for anyone to get out. Lydia knew her unique position and that she appeared to be if not a loyalist, at least a neutral civilian. She petitioned General Howe himself to go out to a nearby village for flour; he granted her petition.³⁸

Mrs. Darragh then set out on foot to warn Washington's troops of the eminent attack. On her journey, she met up with a rebel soldier and relayed the information to deliver to General Washington.³⁹ Lydia's actions changed the outcome of the war immensely because Washington and his troops, upon learning of the British plan, armed themselves and waited in secret for the attack.⁴⁰ The surprise attack was anything but a surprise and the American forces were spared a bloody loss. In her actions, Lydia Darragh made an exceptional and long-lasting contribution to the history of the Revolutionary War and of the United States. If she hadn't risked her life and the safety of her children by defying the controlling General Howe, Washington and his troops may have been caught off guard and perhaps Washington himself could have perished.

NANCY HART

Throughout her ninety-five-year life, Nancy Hart, lived a life of a typical revolutionary woman. She witnessed that often, the home front was just as hazardous, if not more, than the battle front. Learning to wield a weapon, Nancy prepared herself to defend her family and her home. She was vulgar, sturdy, and entirely ignorant to convention and manners but she supported the cause, and was ardently patriotic.⁴¹ There are many stories of women defending their homes, but none that are so quick tempered and reactionary as the story relayed by Elizabeth Ellet in the 1848, *Women of the American Revolution*.

The story goes, Nancy Hart was well known to Royalists, or American colonists who opposed secession from the crown. One day on their way through the unsettled land in Georgia, five Royalists stopped to visit with Ms. Nancy Hart. They confronted her about a story that she had helped a rebel escape the pursuit of British King's men. She admitted to aiding the patriot making no effort to disguise her annoyance with the men. Oddly displeased with her candor, they let the topic die and demanded that she cook them food. Nancy shot words back that she would

³⁸ Berkin, 140.

³⁹ Roberts, *Founding Mothers* 81.

⁴⁰ Diamant, 113

⁴¹ Diamant, 188

never feed King's men or traitors if she could help it; she had to save what food was left to feed her own family except one turkey.

One of the men then shot the turkey dead and demanded that she cook it. She did not passively go into the kitchen to obey them, she paced and swore, and paced some more. Eventually seeing no other way to get the men to leave, Nancy cooked the turkey. As it was cooking, she instructed her young daughter to go out to the spring to fetch water, but also to blow an emergency conch to alert Mr. Hart that there were royalists in the home. While waiting for the turkey to cook, the five men sat around the table and drank until they were loud and jolly. While the men were distracted in their own drunkenness, Nancy smuggled their muskets outside the home one by one. She could get two of them out and in the act of removing the third, she was caught. It was then that trouble began, and she held the men at gunpoint. She threatened to kill the first man to approach her, and in disbelief one lunged toward her. He was shot dead by Ms. Nancy Hart.

Now down to four, the men decided to rush Ms. Hart to seize the musket, but she shot again and wounded another man. At this point in the conflict, Nancy Hart's temper was boiling and when her husband arrived, she reportedly exclaimed "shooting is too good for you." Instead, she took the remaining four men to a tree down her yard and hung all five of them. When Ms. Ellet, Nancy Hart's story teller went to see the hanging tree, a neighbor remarked, "Poor Nancy! She was a honey of a Patriot, but the devil of a wife."⁴²

Nancy Hart is not only written in history as being a strong, independent woman not afraid of a musket, but her actions make her an extraordinary character in the history of the United States. Her story is only one in the abundance of others like it across the American frontier lands during the Revolutionary War. It is also a reflection of how passionately many patriots served their country. History is indebted to Elizabeth Ellet for recording this story so that more can be learned about what it was like to live on the edge of the frontier as a patriot.

PIONEERS

PENELOPE BARKER

The Boston Tea party lives in history as a bold protest of the British tea tax and "taxation without representation" as put so eloquently by James Otis. In North Carolina, a less known tea party was organized as well. The differences are that in Edenton, North Carolina, the citizens did not discard or dump any tea and the organizer of the Edenton Tea Party was a woman, Penelope

⁴² This story is taken from Lincoln Diamant's Revised Edition of Elizabeth Ellet's' *Women of the American Revolution*, 188-190.

Barker. The participants of the Edenton Tea Party were all women making it the earliest women's organized protest in the history of the United States.

Penelope Pagett, born in North Carolina in 1728, to a prominent family. Her father was a planter and doctor. While finances seemed to be secure for Penelope, emotional distress began when her father and sister, mother of two, died and Penelope became mother to her sister's two children and keeper of their family home.⁴³ Not only did she fill the place of her sister as mother to her two children, but she married her now widowed brother-in-law, John Hodges. He died when she was pregnant with their second child leaving her with four young children to raise on her own. Still, now widowed and raising a family her finances were in great order. She inherited her husband's land as well as her preexisting wealth from her father. She was rich, beautiful and young and had no shortage of suitors.⁴⁴ She married again in 1752 and was widowed yet again two years later leaving her even more wealthy. She married one more time, Thomas Barker.

Her marital history may have enhanced her abilities to operate sufficiently completely independent of a man. While her husband Thomas was in London serving as the North Carolina colony agent, she managed the family and home and grew increasingly interested in the politics stirring up in the Colonies. She lived in a time, though, where women did not openly engage in politics, so she held a tea party instead not to raise any suspicion. She spoke to a group of women and reportedly said "Maybe it has only been men who have protested the king up to now."⁴⁵ She insisted that "that only means we women have taken too long to let our voices be heard."⁴⁶ In comparison to the Boston Tea Party, she announced, "We are signing our names to a document, not hiding ourselves behind costumes like the men in Boston did at their tea party. The British will know who we are."⁴⁷

The proclamation boycotting British Tea and British textiles was published in London newspapers. The fifty-one women in Edenton were ridiculed and mocked for their attempt, but most hurtfully laughed off. Until other women in the colonies followed Edenton's lead and began boycotting as well.⁴⁸ What was before a matter of a few to the crown now became a larger problem. The lasting impact Penelope had on American history by organizing the Edenton Tea Party was advancing that women had just as much power to affect change as men did. She and the other signers of the proclamation advanced women's rights. These efforts distinguish Ms.

⁴³ Donna Campbell Smith, "Penelope Barker: First American Woman Political Activist" *HubPages* (February 22, 2014): <https://hubpages.com/education/Penelope-Barker-and-the-Edenton-Tea-Party>, accessed November 5, 2017.

⁴⁴ Smith, "Penelope Parker"

⁴⁵ Diane Silcox-Jarret, "Penelope Barker, Leader of the Edenton Tea Party" *Heroines of the American Revolution, America's Founding Mothers* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: Green Angle Press, 1998), 17.

⁴⁶ Silcox-Jarret, 17.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Penelope Barker House Welcome Center, "Penelope Barker: Mother of Women's Political Liberation" <http://ehcnc.org/people/penelope-barker>, accessed November 5, 2017.

Barker as an extraordinary player in the history of the United States and warrants a commemorative stamp.

PHILLIS WHEATLEY

Born sometime around 1753, Phillis Wheatley came to Boston on a slave ship from Africa in 1761. She was most likely born in Gambia but because of the lack of records taken about slave's lives, there is only speculation. She was a slave to the Wheatley family but grew up much more like a daughter than a slave. She received an education from her master and the children. She learned languages, but most importantly she learned to read and write. Her life became an anomaly. Phillis, now a Wheatley, published her very first poem in 1767 only six years after being enslaved and brought to the United States.

In 1773, she wrote her first book of verse titled *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*. Due to her unusual status as an African slave, she had to include a preface in the book in which men including John Hancock asserted that she had written the poems and not some other author.⁴⁹

When the war broke out, she wrote several tributes to the American Patriots, including a 1776 tribute to George Washington that he responded to with an invitation for her to visit his Cambridge camp and her poem "Liberty and Peace" celebrated the coming end of the American revolution.⁵⁰ The lasting impact of Phillis Wheatley's accomplishments are simple in that she led a life totally opposite of what most American colonists expected from a slave. Many held a belief that African slaves were illiterate, inferior, and incapable of intellectual achievement. She defied this standard and her poems were attested to by little less than twenty prominent New England men. Additionally, she made an extraordinary contribution to the History of the United States as being the first African American poet.

ESTHER DEBERDT REED

In 1780 Philadelphia, the largest domestic fund-raising campaign of the Revolutionary War was started with a simple publication, *Sentiments of an American Woman*.⁵¹ The author, Ms. Esther DeBerdt Reed, a Philadelphia woman herself and wife of the Pennsylvania Governor, called women across Pennsylvania to come forward with domestic donations.⁵² The plan was

⁴⁹ Phillis Wheatley, "Preface" *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral* (1773): <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/409/pg409-images.html>, accessed November 1, 2017

⁵⁰ Phillis Wheatley, *Liberty and Peace* (Boston MA: Warden and Russell, 1784).

⁵¹ Esther DeBerdt Reed, *Sentiments of an American Woman* (Philadelphia: John Dunlap, 1780) Rare Book And Special Collections Division, Library of Congress.

⁵² Berkin, 45.

ambitious, but much called for. The war was depriving the American troops of necessity and efficiency.

In *Sentiments of an American Woman*, Esther DeBerdt Reed writes, “Our ambition is kindled by the same of those heroines of antiquity” referring to the many women who have come before her and fought physically and emotionally the war alongside men. She continues about the women, “who have rendered their sex illustrious, and have proved to the universe, that, if the weakness of our Constitution, if opinion and manners did not forbid us to march to glory by the same paths as the Men, we should at least equal, and sometimes surpass them in our love for the public good.”⁵³ The call for action on Esther’s part sparked a large outpouring of support. Many women of wealth or status joined in the effort.

The lasting impact of Esther DeBerdt Reeds efforts is like that of Penelope Barker in that she promoted the effectiveness of woman across the colonies and advanced the rights of women to participate in national affairs outside of the home. The revolution bred extraordinary women who made lasting impacts on the history of the United States and Ms. DeBerdt Reed is no exception. Her contributions, like many, changed the course of women’s history forever.

DESIGN PROPOSAL

As an effort to be abundantly transparent, there is a complete understanding that the artwork submitted via this proposal will not be considered. It is merely to paint the full picture of the potential of this landmark stamp set. The design of the stamps, themselves, was a process on its own. Benjamin T. Fake is a designer in Pennsylvania, he is the artist and designer for the proposed stamp set. He graduated from Kutztown University of Pennsylvania in 2015 obtaining a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Communication Design with specific concentrations in Graphic Design and Advertising.

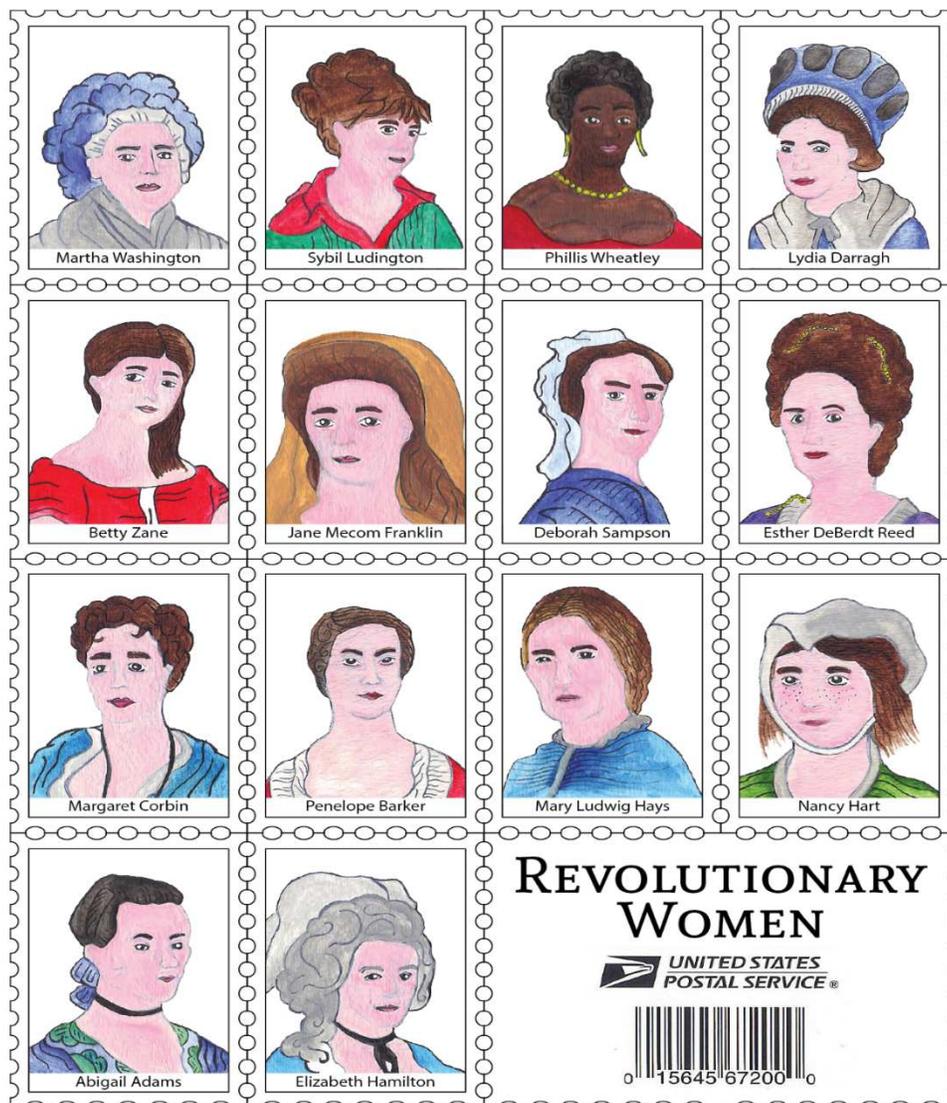
The artist found that this project reminded him of his creative abilities to add style to any character to enhance their expression. He drew inspiration from the fact that despite societal class, the women in the project stood up for their country and held true to their beliefs. This inspiration is seen in the assorted colors the artist uses to depict the revolutionary era fashion in each portrait.



⁵³ Esther DeBerdt Reed, *Sentiments of an American Woman*.

Although the illustration is original, the artist began the task at hand by researching each woman on his own and in consult with the author. He then found the most high-quality portrait style images of each woman and traced rough sketches using a micron ink pen onto tracing paper. While tracing these faces the artist held a loose hand and traced with a unique graphic style. He was solely focused on making up the character out of outlines and shapes adding his own flare with some shapes and lines.

Once these rough outlines were complete the artist transferred the outlines to water color paper retracing each line with black ink. Once the ink dried he added the water color. Once all portraits and backgrounds were finished the artist scanned the illustrations into the computer and into the stamp template for printing. Please find, on the next page, a mocked-up stamp set design proposal based on this process.



CONCLUSION

With the fire of a new feminist movement brought on by the Women's March on DC in January 2017 and the opening of the National Women's History museum, interest in Women's history has flourished. There has been a standing interest, however, in the history of Women during the American Revolution. Many historians have experimented with the subject writing histories of revolutionary women, but no author or historian other than a few reference materials have been able to lay women of all different classes, upbringing, geographical location, and even race. In this project, women of all creeds, color, and class are in the most graphic way possible put onto the same page. Supporting research has allowed women like Martha Washington to be placed on a stamp set next to 16-year old Sybil Ludington. This is proof of the overarching nature of this project and its intention to fill the gap in the preexisting literature.

A stamp set featuring fourteen different women, all who have made incomparable contributions to the History of the United States is bound to be an interest to not only stamp collectors but to the public who will enjoy seeing the friendly faces of familiar stories as customers of the United States Postal System.

I sincerely appreciate any time given to the consideration of this stamp set. It is the intention of the research and artwork to inspire this committee to move this stamp suggestion forward. As a matter of issuance date, it is fitting that these stamps be first circulated on or around Mother's Day once the entire process has run its course.

Sincerely,

Corey Elizabeth Summers

Corey Elizabeth Summers

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