

# Women in History

## **Alice Stokes Paul - 1885-1977**

Alice Stokes Paul is credited as the leading figure responsible for the 19th Amendment (woman suffrage) giving women the right to vote. Born in Mount Laurel , NJ , she was jailed on more than one occasion for being an advocate of women's suffrage. Her outstanding achievements include founding the Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage and the National Woman's Party. She wrote the Equal Rights Amendment in 1921 but it was never ratified by all the states to become a constitutional amendment.

[www.alicepaul.org](http://www.alicepaul.org)

## **Emma Weeks Metzger - 1870-1964**

New Jersey 's first woman doctor was Emma Weeks Metzger. She operated a family practice and maternity hospital in Riverside , NJ . She was the first woman elected to the Burlington County Medical Society in 1896. She was also the recipient of the Medical Society of New Jersey's Golden Merit Award for over 50 years of medical practice.

## **Clara Harlowe Barton - 1821- 1912**

Clara Barton resided in Bordentown briefly, but founded the first free school in New Jersey there in 1852. She then dedicated her time as a volunteer. After the war President Lincoln gave her permission to search for lost soldiers through a letter writing campaign. Barton wrote the American amendment to the International Red Cross constitution, which allowed the Red Cross to come to the United States . The American Red Cross was formed in 1881 and Barton was the first president. She gained most of her medical experience when she was young by caring for her bedridden brother. She took directions for care and medication from a physician and used her skills to help wounded and dying soldiers. During her time as president, she organized relief work for disasters such as floods, famines, pestilence, and earthquakes: not only in the United States but also throughout the world. She pushed for America to sign the Geneva Agreement, which provided relief for sick and wounded soldiers in 1882.

<http://www.americancivilwar.com/women/cb.html>

## **Patience Lovell Wright - 1725-1786**

Considered America 's first professional sculptor, Patience Lovell Wright was born in Bordentown , NJ . Wright traveled to England and created political officials, actors and other well-known figures out of wax. Some say that Wright was a spy for the colonies during her time in London . She attempted to open a wax museum in Paris but could not find the opportunity. The well-known wax modeler, painter and diemaker, Joseph Wright was her son.

## **Charity Still - 1775-1857**

Charity Still was born Sidney Steel on a plantation in Maryland . A drunken slave master killed her father and she vowed she would not die a slave. During the late 17 th century she met her husband, Levin Still, who purchased his own freedom. She attempted to escape from slavery with four of her children in 1804 but was caught by slave hunters a few months later. She attempted to escape again, this time with only two children and her successful attempt lead her to Shamong , NJ . There, she changed her name to Charity so it would be harder for slave hunters to find her. Her son William, youngest of 18 children, later went on to become known as the

“Father” of the Underground Railroad and also published the book “The Underground Railroad.” Another one of her children, James, became known as the “Black Doctor of the Pines.”

### **Elizabeth Coleman White - 1871-1954**

The nation was first introduced to blueberry cultivation by Elizabeth Coleman White. She was born October 5, 1871 on a cranberry farm in New Lisbon, NJ. Her Quaker family turned Whitesbog, NJ into a company town by creating a factory, worker's cottages, a company store, and eventually their own electric powerhouse. She helped organize the New Jersey Blueberry Cooperative Association in 1927. She was the first woman member of the American Cranberry Association. She prepared a book on cranberry cultivation, which became a standard guide in the industry. She was also the first woman recipient of the New Jersey Department of Agriculture citation. In 1985 at the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Whitesbog Blueberry Festival children were equipped with 5/8-inch gauges used to find the biggest blueberries. White's great nephew Mark Darlington designed the gauges.

[www.whitesbog.org](http://www.whitesbog.org)

### **Sybilla Righton Masters - unknown -1720**

Sybilla Righton Masters was born on her father's plantation in Burlington Township, NJ. She later traveled to London to obtain what was the first patent issued to an American colonist for a method of stamping corn into cornmeal in 1715. Unfortunately the patent had to be issued in her husband's name. Her vision and entrepreneurial skills also allowed her to secure a patent for her method of working straw for hats and bonnets in 1716. She later opened a hat shop in London.

### **Indian Ann Roberts - 1805-1894**

The legendary Indian Ann Roberts resided in Shamong, NJ. She was a Lenape woman who roamed through Burlington County selling baskets. She gained fame for being the last of the Delaware Indians. She led an unusual lifestyle and was extremely talented at making baskets. Some of her basketry survives in area museums and private collections. It is also on display at the Shamong Municipal Building.

### **Margaret Hill Morris - 1737-1816**

Margaret Hill Morris was a Quaker widow and local medical practitioner living in Burlington, NJ when the Revolutionary War began. She decided not to leave her home during the war even though there was fighting right outside of her window. Her diary is one of few from the Revolutionary war that was written by a woman. It tells horror stories of what she witnessed. She was an active medical practitioner but never became a doctor. She later recorded the ravages of the 1793 yellow fever epidemic in Philadelphia. It is believed that she was Burlington County's first woman physician. She died in Burlington in 1816 and is buried in Friend's Cemetery directly behind the Friend's Meetinghouse.

### **Agnes Gilkerson - 1838-1881**

Agnes Gilkerson lived in Smithville with her husband Hezekiah Smith, founder of H.B Smith Machine Company. Gilkerson's husband had purchased the entire town of Shreveville (for \$23,000) and renamed it Smithville in 1865. She became the editor of the weekly journal “New Jersey Mechanic” which was published in Smithville and distributed nationally. Buried in St. Andrews Cemetery, Mount Holly, NJ

**Mary Irick Drexel - 1868-1948**

Mary Irick Drexel was born in 1868 in Vincentown , NJ . She lived on a 240-acre plot named "Locust Grove". In 1891 she married George W. Childs Drexel at Trinity Episcopal Church on Mill Street . An extension had to be built on the church to accommodate all the guests.

She then moved to Philadelphia with her new husband into a house that her millionaire father-in-law bought them on 18 th and Locust Streets. Today the house is now the Curtis Institute of Music. The Drexels were high profile patrons of the Philadelphia Orchestra and the Metropolitan Opera Company.

At one point, Mary worked as Director of the Philadelphia Red Cross. She also had a library built and named it after her mother, Sally Stretch Keen. The library is located at 94 Main Street in Vincentown. Throughout the years, Mr. and Mrs. Drexel donated a large number of books to keep the people interested in reading.

Mary Drexel died at the age of 80. Her portrait, along with that of her mothers, hangs in the Sally Stretch Keen Library.

**Mary Van Meter Grice - 1858 - 1936**

A resident of Riverton, she made significant contributions to children's education at the local and state levels. One of the founding members of "The Porch Club", a women's club which involved itself in many social and educational undertakings. She was elected the first female member of the Riverton School Board in 1897, was elected the first president of the New Jersey State Congress of Mothers, which eventually became the state PTA. Information contributed by Joseph Laufer, Burlington County Historian.

**Mary Robert Taylor**

In a 1975 memoir, Gently Sister Gently, she chronicled her life as a Quaker farm wife, mother and missionary. She resided at River Side Homestead (Taylor Farm), on Taylor Lane, Cinnaminson. Information contributed by Joseph Laufer, Burlington County Historian.

**Keziah Burr Howell - 1793 - 1801**

First Lady of New Jersey A member of the famous Burr Family of Burlington County and resident of Peachfield Plantation on Burrs Road, Mount Holly. Information contributed by Joseph Laufer, Burlington County Historian.

**Varina Howell Davis - First Lady of The Confederacy.**

A member of the illustrious Burr Family and resident of Peachfield Plantation, married Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederacy. Information contributed by Joseph Laufer, Burlington County Historian.