

**ABIGAIL
SMITH
ADAMS
1744-1818**



**REMEMBER
THE
LADIES**

Abigail Adams was insightful, witty, and intensely concerned about politics. She shaped her husband John's political thought and career through letters they exchanged. Their correspondence offered a unique perspective on life during the revolutionary era.

In March 1776, John was in Philadelphia with the Continental Congress working on the Declaration of Independence. Abigail urged him to consider the rights of women in the new, independent nation. She wrote, "I long to hear that you have declared an independency. 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...If particular care and attention is not paid to the ladies, we are determined to foment a rebellion."

The Declaration specified that "all men are created equal". However, Abigail's letter was a private first step in the fight for equal rights for women. She also strongly supported a woman's right to education. She wrote in 1778, "you need not to be told how much female education is neglected, nor how fashionable it has been to ridicule female learning".

Recognized and admired as a formidable woman in her own right, "Remember the Ladies" became a battle cry for the women's movement. By the mid-1800s, large numbers of women were being educated and some were attending college. In July 1848, Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton organized the Seneca Falls Convention, which addressed women's right to vote – and their lack of access to education and professional careers.

Soon the roles of women began to change. Harriet Tubman established the Underground Railroad. Elizabeth Blackwell earned a medical degree. Amelia Bloomer launched a dress reform movement. Myrtila Miner opened a school to train black female teachers. Victoria Woodhull ran for President. Emily Warren Roebling supervised the construction of the Brooklyn Bridge.

Emma Willard established the Troy Female Seminary to prepare women for any profession – even mathematics and science. Ava Lovelace wrote the first computer program. Astronomer Maria Mitchell was first American to discover a comet. Marie Curie was the first person awarded two Nobel Prizes – in physics (1903) and chemistry (1911). Emmy Noether, considered the greatest mathematician by Albert Einstein, worked on his relativity theories.

In August 1920, suffrage took center stage as Tennessee was the last hope for ratification before the November elections. It became the 19th Amendment when 24-year-old anti-suffrage legislator Harry Burn, on the advice of his mother, changed his vote. In November, nine million women went to the polls to vote for the first time. Women continue to overcome obstacles to reach their goals.

This series called "Remember the Ladies" focuses on local women whom you may not know. These trailblazers all had one thing in common: a fire inside of them that allowed them to persevere against any setbacks. Join me in learning about some truly inspirational women.