

March - Women's History Month
by Michelle Schulten

Women's History Month, where do I even begin?? So much has been written about women in History but how much do we really know? In reality, so much has been said and written about, so few women. Not to mention minority women that only recently have started to be talked and written about. I'm sure there are many, many, reasons for this, but for the sake of ethics and morals, not to mention politics, I will refrain from the obvious and the overactive imagination of all of us.

Let's start with something relatively easy, for those that are interested. Where can you find good, detailed and reliable information about women who made a difference? I think the best way is to look at the source. By that I mean autobiographies first and then biographies. Autobiographies are great for getting the real feel for the person, what they were like, how they lived, what they were passionate about, the culture and time that they lived in, and hopefully where they came from. Where they came from is often important to get a good sense on how they did what they did and possibly dependent on their culture, why they did it. Sometimes the downfall of reading a biography about a person is that in most cases they are extremely humble and you don't get the fantastical parts of what they accomplished. This brings us to autobiographies. Autobiographies can have much more information about the accomplishments of the person they are writing about, but you'll want to know if the author got their information first hand from the subject or from research. Both have good and bad aspects. The downside is misinformation. Often if you question the information that is given you can verify it through other sources, much like the methodology in scientific research.

So bringing us back to those women who made history; how would we define who would be listed and who should not? My belief is that it should be someone who ultimately made some kind of change for the better for some type of life in this universe. I think most of us agree so far, but do we include the infamous as well? I believe they should be included. This is history after all, and if we don't include the bad with the good, how would we learn? We would have to make the mistake ourselves, i.e. repeating history or the past for lack of knowing. Isn't it easier to learn from others, whether it is just information or mistakes?

One of my favorite things to do when in a group of people and needing some kind of Ice breaker to start a conversation is by asking: "If you could spend the afternoon with any woman from history and ask all the questions you wanted, who would that be?" My only requirement is that it is someone that has passed from this world. Sometimes you can narrow it down to the state you live in, or the United States, or a hemisphere, or the world in general. You'll get some very interesting answers and learn a lot about the people around you.

Here are some of the women that come to my mind, by geographical location, a bit about who they were, what they did, and why I chose them. At the end I will tell you my all time wish for a conversation.

World:

- **Hedy Lamarr** - for her courage, intelligence, and compassion for the greater good. Hedy Lamarr, born Hedwig Eva Kresler, in Vienna, Austria, November 9, 1914. Hedwig was born to a fairly affluent non-practicing Jewish family. A young woman with a knowledge of many of the arts; a concert pianist, ballerina, and actress. In her young life, she was never noticed for the genius that she possessed, being that women were to be seen only for their beauty and not their thoughts, Hedwig loved acting and continued that throughout her life. At the age of 18 she starred in a film called, "Ecstasy". Unfortunately she gained notoriety in the German circles for her nude scene. Fritz Mandl, an Austrian arms dealer became infatuated with her and despite her feelings of misgivings and her father's apprehension, her father consented to her marriage to Fritz just before her 19th birthday. As the wife of a very rich and prosperous arms dealer at the beginning of World War II, she was to be the mistress of all matters of the house and be the beauty on Fritz's arm. Lavish parties were thrown in their multiple estates and Hedwig was to be the pretty flower. It wasn't until a private showing of *Ecstasy*, at one of the parties, that Fritz became jealous and locked her in one of the estates and away from everyone. She would be escorted to see her parents, and it was there that her father warned her about the coming of the Nazis for the Jews, but thought she was safe with Fritz. By then, Fritz was on the inside with the Reich. At one of the parties in 1937, Hedwig saw the horridness of what was happening and planned an escape from Fritz and from Austria. She ended up in London, hiding from her husband and trying to convince her mother to come as well since her father had died in 1935. Her mother refused at first but later did leave Vienna. Hedwig was introduced to Louis B. Mayer, of MGM Studios. Mayer promised to make her a star and paid for her passage to the U.S. On the ship Mayer and his wife decided Hedwig should change her name, now to be Hedy Lamarr. Once she was in the states it took quite some time for the Hollywood types to take her seriously as an actress and cast her for any parts that had some substance to them. During that time she met and had relationships with many men. Five marriages and divorces, and three children. While living the life of a star in Hollywood she met George Antheil, a composer and pianist. They became wonderful friends and with his help, they created an invention to change the frequencies on radio transmissions from the melody of a musical piece. This idea was taken to the National Inventors Council in December of 1940, in hopes that the U.S. Navy could use it to hide their radio transmissions from the Germans. Her invention was patented under her name, but the Navy didn't consider it because it came from a woman. She also invented an improved traffic stoplight, a tablet that dissolved in water making it flavored and carbonated, a form of spread spectrum technology that enabled the basis of our current wireless communication. For a time she dated Howard Hughes who called her a genius. Hedy eventually moved her mother to California to live with her. Hedy became quite a renowned actress. Prior to her death in January of 2000, she had become a recluse and moved to Florida. She died of heart disease. Her ashes were spread in the Vienna Woods per her wishes by her estranged son, Anthony Loder. So much more is known about this vivacious and intelligent woman. If you would like to learn more from a wonderful book, I highly recommend reading: *The Only Woman in the Room*, by Marie Benedict (a phenomenal author and historian).

- **Mileva Maric Einstein** - for her intelligence and her tenacity. Mileva was born in Austria-Hungary, (Serbia, today) on the 19th of December, 1875. She was born into a wealthy family, the oldest of three children. Her father was a career military man and thought it prudent for his daughter to be educated and by the time she was in high school he got special permission to have her attend the Royal Classical High School in Zagreb, which was an all male private school. She had to pass entrance exams to get in as a tenth grader. Two years later she passed the entrance exams to attend physics lectures, and two years later passed the final exams. Her highest grades were always in math and physics. She moved to Switzerland due to ill health and attended school in Zurich, studying medicine for one semester at the University of Zurich, in the spring of 1896. In the fall of that same year she transferred to the Zurich Polytechnic. To get into the Polytechnic school she had to pass a rigorous mathematics exam, which she did pass and enrolled in the diploma course to teach physics and mathematics. It was there that she met her future husband, Albert Einstein. In 1900, Albert passed his final exams and graduated, staying in Zurich. Mileva unfortunately failed twice and found that she was pregnant with Albert's child. She returned to her family and gave birth to a daughter, Lieserl, in early 1902. Sadly, little is known of Lieserl, how long she lived or what became of her. All that is known is that she is mentioned in a letter between Mileva and Albert indicating that Lieserl had scarlet fever in 1903. Sometime after the letter Mileva returned to Switzerland and married Albert, who was working in the patent office in Bern. A year later they had their first son, Hans Albert. Mileva worked to keep Albert's home life tidy and raise their son, while Albert worked on his study of physics and theories. He was working on the theory of relativity and the famous formula $E=mc^2$, which was presented to the public in 1905. The current thought is that during the time that Albert was working on his theories that Mileva would assist while he was working at the patent office or they would collaborate during the time they spent together. In 1910 Mileva gave birth to a second son, Eduard. After 1912, many moves most probably put a strain on their marriage, as well as Albert's reintroduction to his cousin Elsa. By the middle of 1914, they were living in Berlin and Mileva was very unhappy, she hadn't wanted to move to the city. At this point Albert had very strict terms for her if she wanted to stay with him. She must have thought his terms were too much and took the boys and returned to Zurich the day after World War I started. By 1914, they were separated and Albert was required to give her nearly fifty percent of his salary for support, which was only required for the five years during their separation prior to their divorce being finalized in 1919. Albert promised to support his sons with the money awarded him from the Nobel Prize. The agreement was that he would get the Prize and Mileva would get the money for the boys and she could use the interest to live on. This lasted until 1930, when Eduard had a breakdown, being diagnosed with schizophrenia and having to be institutionalized. By 1939, Mileva was forced, with Albert's permission, to sell the investments that were in the boy's names, to pay for Eduard's care. Albert was given deed to her home and she retained power of attorney so it couldn't be sold. Mileva suffered a stroke on August 4, 1948, and died. She is interred in Zurich. She was outlived by both her sons and Albert. The secrets that died with her, may or may not ever be known. How much did she play a part in the advancement of physics, in Albert's

name? A wonderful book that is highly recommended for further information about Mileva Meric, is: *Einstein's Wife, The Real Story of Mileva Einstein-Maric*, by Allen Esterson and David C. Cassidy.

- **Mother Teresa** - for her courage and compassion. Born on August 26, 1910, Agnes Gonxh Bojaxhiu, in the Ottoman Empire (now Skopje, North Macedonia). She describes herself, "By blood, I am Albanian, By citizenship, an Indian. By faith, I am a Catholic nun. As to my calling, I belong to the world. As to my heart, I belong entirely to the Heart of Jesus". She was raised in a religious family and as such she was confirmed in the church in November of 1916. She had a love of the church and her faith from an early age. Her father passed away suddenly when she was eight years old and her mother continued the raising of Agnes and her siblings in the Jesuit church. In September of 1928, at eighteen she moved to Ireland to become a missionary and joined the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary known as the Sisters of Loreto. It was there that she was given the name, Sister Mary Teresa after St. Therese of Lisieux. By December of that year she embarked on her first mission in Calcutta, India. She took her vows as a nun and started teaching at a girls school in Calcutta. From that time on she was known as Mother Teresa. In 1950, she started The Missionaries of Charity. That charity's mission is to serve the poorest of the poor in as many as 133 countries around the world with over 4,500 nuns. In 1979, she won the Nobel Peace Prize for her humanitarian work, and 16 years after her death in 1997, she was canonized, Saint Teresa of Calcutta. Mother Teresa died September 5, 1997, after several years of heart problems, malaria, and an exorcism. A wonderful book about Mother Teresa, *Mother Teresa: In My Own Words*, by Mother Teresa. While this book is an autobiography written by Mother Teresa herself, she is very humble, but it does shed light on the trials she went through to offer comfort to those she served.
- **Princess Diana** - for her courage, her compassion, and her resilience. Born Diana Frances Spencer, July 1, 1961, and tragically died August 31, 1997, in a traffic crash. Her mother and father, Edward John Spencer - the Viscount Althorp, divorced when she was a young girl and her father gained custody of her. Her father remarried Raine - Countess of Dartmouth. Both of her grandmothers were ladies-in-waiting for Queen Elizabeth. Diana herself described her childhood as "unhappy and unstable". At the age of 14, she became Lady Diana Spencer after her father became Earl Spencer. After completing finishing school (a private school for girls that prepares them for society by teaching social graces) in Switzerland she moved to London and became the assistant at a Kindergarten. She loved children and working with them was something she wanted to do. She met her future husband, Prince Charles, when she was 16, he was dating her older sister. Three years later they were reacquainted and started dating. Charles was 13 years older than she was. They had only been dating a short while and after meeting Charles' parents, Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip they were engaged on February 6, 1981, and married July 29, 1981. Upon her marriage she became Diana Princess of Wales. They had two sons, William - born June 21, 1982, and Harry - born September 15, 1984. Princess Diana went through long bouts of depression and feeling of inadequacy in the eyes of the royal family. She eventually got a divorce after many unhappy marital years and bouts of mental issues Princess Diana filed for separation in

December of 1992, presumably brought on by the tension of the family and the thought that Prince Charles was disappointed when their second child was a boy, he had expressed wanting a girl. The divorce was finalized in August of 1996. All of the turmoil and family obligations that Princess Diana faced never interfered with her ability to be a role model, a person of great charity, having compassion for her fellow human beings, and her love of children. During her short life the accomplishments she made were numerous. She was a worldwide philanthropist, championing causes such as homelessness, HIV/AIDS, children's welfare, disabilities, and the opposition to the use of landmines. She never stopped being a person that fought for the needs of others. A wonderful book written about her about her life is, *Diana: Her True Story*, by Andrew Morton. This is a biography and some of it may be embellished or even having some edits strongly suggested by the monarchy.

- **Isabella Bird** - for her strength, her courage, and her adventurous nature. Born near Leeds, in Boroughbridge, Yorkshire, England on October 15th, 1831. Isabella was a very sick young girl and endured significant pain, even a spinal surgery without anesthetic when she was 19 years old. Her parents were instructed by a physician that Isabella's condition would benefit from being outdoors and because of this she learned to ride horses from a very early age. When she was three years old her younger sister, Henrietta (Hennie), was born. Isabella and her sister Hennie were very close all throughout their lives. Isabella was an avid reader and was taught many things by her parents. At the age of 16, she published a pamphlet on "free trade versus protectionism", and she continued to write and publish books all during her life. So many books in fact that you could spend a day trying to find them all and who knows how long trying to read them all. I believe there are 24! By the age of 23, her doctors advised that she should embark on a sea voyage to help her health. By that time in her life she was ready for a change, one that she had unknowingly been preparing for all her life up until that point. This is the point in her life that most people are familiar with. She came to America on a ship to stay with cousins and returned after her small allowance from her father ran out. While she was in the States she wrote her first book, *An Englishwoman in America*. She left Britain again in 1872, on a voyage that took her to Australia, then onto Hawaii (then known as the Sandwich Islands) where she climbed the mountains of Hawaii and learned to ride a horse western style, not sidesaddle as she was taught as a child and accustomed to. She wrote her second book, *Six Months in the Sandwich Islands*. She didn't stop long, she got back on a boat and traveled to San Francisco. From there she made her way to Colorado and her famous visit. She traveled more than 800 miles on horseback, dressed in men's clothing. She traveled in horrible snowstorms, stayed with strangers along her travels, slept in barns, and to top off everything she climbed Long's Peak with a strange man! A man by the name of Jim Nugent, the locals knew him as Mountain Jim, and by the locals around Estes Park as an outlaw, but a gentleman. Mountain Jim had been mauled by a bear and his face was very disfigured, but that didn't seem to bother Isabella, as her and Jim struck up a friendship. This adventure led to her writing, *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains*. She traveled to many countries over her many years. At the age of 49, after being pursued by yet another man from Edinburgh and her sister dying of typhoid, Isabella accepted his proposal. In February

1881, Isabella married Dr. John Bishop, a surgeon from Edinburgh. They were married for only a short five years when John died. Isabella inherited a large amount of money and decided to study medicine and travel as a missionary to India, despite her advanced age of 60. While in India, she met the Maharajah of Kashmir and he gave her a piece of land to build a hospital. She had the hospital built to house sixty beds and a dispensary for women. An acquaintance, Fanny Jane Butler and Isabella were the founders of the completed, John Bishop Memorial Hospital. From there she traveled, using her medical skills, with British soldiers to survey the area between Baghdad and Tehran. Her travels and honors continued until her death. She died after returning home from a trip to Morocco, where she rode a huge black stallion that was a gift to her from the Sultan. She passed away at her home in Edinburgh, October 7, 1904, just days before her 73rd birthday....and she was planning another trip to China. I have read many books by and about Isabella, but the one I have enjoyed the most is a historical fiction book titled, *Embrace of the Wild*, by Linda Ballou. Linda was a guest author at one of the Conifer Historical Society's Book Club events. Linda traveled in the footsteps of Isabella, traveling to Hawaii and Colorado.

North America/United States:

- **Sacagewea** - for her tenacity, strength, and enduring courage. Let me start with a few things about Sacagewea that are unknown; first - we really don't know how her name was spelled - Sacagawea or Sakakawea or Sacajawea, second - we also don't know exactly when she was born but likely around 1788 in the late spring, third - we're not sure how old she was when she was kidnapped maybe 12, fourth - we don't know how old she was when she was married off to Toussaint Charbonneau maybe 13, and fifth - we don't know exactly when she died - she could have been 24 by some reports or 96 by other reports. What we do know is that she was born into a Lemhi Shoshone tribe, living in the area around the panhandle of Idaho on the Montana border near the Continental Divide. She was kidnapped around the age of 12 by a group of Hidatsa tribal members. Sacagewea was with them long enough to become fluent in their language. She was sold or possibly wagered away into a non-consensual marriage at about the age of 13, to Toussaint Charbonneau, who was at about 20 years older than her. Prior to their marriage, Charbonneau had already purchased another Shoshone girl for a wife, Otter Woman (she was possibly Sacagewea's sister or cousin, she was also a kidnapped Shoshoni). After their marriage they remained with the Hidatsa until sometime prior to Jean Baptista's birth, Sacagawea's son, on February 11, 1805. Jean was born at Fort Mandan where Charbonneau had met and hired on with Meriwether Lewis and William Clark for their Corps of Discovery, mapping and exploring a route from the east coast of the U.S. to the Pacific Ocean through the new Louisiana Purchase. In April of 1805, just after Sakagewea had given birth to her son, Jean, the expedition left for the journey west. The trials and tribulations that Sacagewea went through traveling nearly 6,400 miles from her home to the Pacific Coast of Oregon and back to Fort Mandan, are unimaginable to me. She was hired on as an Indian interpreter but they soon found that she was valuable for her directions and herbal remedies, everything from illnesses to finding plants to build up their strength. During the trip to the Pacific Sacagawea found her brother, Cameahwait, who was now the Chief of the Shoshone tribe that she and

Otter Woman had been kidnapped from. Cameahwait was so thankful for Lewis and Clark to have reunited him with his sister that he gifted them horses. When they arrived at the Pacific coast near present day Astoria, Oregon. Most remarkably, both Sacagawea and Clark's black enslaved servant York, were both allowed to vote on the location of the winter quarters for the Corp. This being the first time a woman or a black man were allowed to have a say let alone vote on something as significant as this. After the return to Fort Mandan, William Clark made an offer to raise Jean Baptista, who he fondly called Pomp. Sacagawea and Charbonneau agreed, and they would bring him to Clark once Clark was settled. They spent three years with the Hidatsa and then joined William Clark in St. Louis, in 1809. In 1812, Sacagawea gave birth to a daughter, Lizette Charbonneau and within a year, both Pomp and Lizette had been legally adopted by Clark. There are some written records that Sacagawea died in 1812, in a skirmish at a trading fort on the way back to her people, with Charbonneau. But there are also oral stories that she left her husband and married into a Comanche tribe and later returned to the Shoshone in Wyoming and died in 1884. A remarkable woman with a remarkable life, that changed life for us. There are too many wonderful books about her and her life, as well as books on the Lewis and Clark Expedition, number one on my list is, *Undaunted Courage*, by Stephen E. Ambrose, as well as the many published journals of the men from the Corps of Discovery.

- **Harriet Tubman** - for her tenacity, strength, and resilience. Born Araminta Ross in March of 1822, born into slavery to parents who were both slaves, in Dorchester County, Maryland. Her nickname was Minty. Prior to her escaping slavery she suffered beatings, whippings, and even a traumatic head injury from a heavy metal weight being thrown at another slave but hitting her in the head. This injury caused her headaches, dizzy spells, seizures, and hypersomnia (although this diagnosis is only a presumption) throughout her life. In 1849, she escaped her enslavement to Philadelphia. Her religious upbringing and the visions she had after her head injury led her to believe God was speaking to her and this devotion to her religion stayed with her throughout her life, being a devout Methodist. In every part of her courageous life she created a large network of antislavery activists, helping to rescue over 70 slaves, who fondly called her "Moses", by personally escorting them from their slave masters to freedom. She ran the "Underground Railroad" for eight years. She met John Brown and helped him plan the raid on Harpers Ferry in 1859. She also worked as a cook, spy, and nurse for the Union Army during the Civil war. Later in her life she was an activist in the women's suffrage movement in the U.S. She married a free black man, John Tubman, in 1844, taking his surname and soon after changing her name to Harriet. In 1855, her father bought her mother, they were now both free, but the area that they lived in was very hostile. Harriet led both of her parents north to St. Catharines, Canada. In late 1859, she moved them back to a seven acre farm in Fleming, New York that was sold to her by Frances Seward, the wife of William Seward a U.S. Senator at the time and an abolitionist. In 1867, Harriet received word that her husband John was killed by a white man. On March 18, 1869, Harriet married Nelson Davis, a private who had served in the Colored Infantry during the Civil War. Nelson died of tuberculosis in the fall of 1888, and it was then that Harriet finally was able to get money from the government, although not for her service, but for the service

of her husband through the Dependent and Disability Pension Act, being granted the monthly widow's pension of \$8.00 per month. In the late 1890s, when Harriet was in her late 70s, a doctor performed brain surgery on her to alleviate the pressure from her childhood head trauma. Harriet professed that it worked and that she was more comfortable. In 1911, she was admitted to the Harriet Tubman Home for the Aged; she was frail, ill and penniless. Her care was supported by people who read about her condition in a New York newspaper. She died on March 10, 1913, of pneumonia. She was buried at Fort Hill Cemetery in Auburn, New York with semi-military honors. A famous quote from Harriet is, "I was conductor of the Underground Railroad for eight years, and I can say what most conductors can't say, 'I never ran my train off the track and I never lost a passenger.'" The books about the life of Harriet Tubman are bountiful and well worth the effort to read all of the wonderful things that this woman did for the betterment of women.

- **Abigail Adams** - for her ability to go where only one woman had gone before her with grace, strength and courage. Born Abigail Smith on November 22, 1744, to William Smith, a Congregational minister who was a Yankee leader, and Elizabeth Quincy-Smith, from a well known political family from the Massachusetts colony. Abigail was the youngest of three girls, Mary being the oldest by five years, and then Elizabeth (Betsy) by two years. As a child Abigail was sickly and as an adult she thought that had something to do with not being formally educated. She was taught to read and write by her mother and her extended family had large libraries where Abigail read voraciously. She learned French as well through her reading. Abigail's family owned slaves, but as an adult Abigail would come to express her beliefs against it. In 1759, she met John Adams, the future president, she was just 15, at the time. During the five year courtship, Abigail's father approved of the match but her mother thought John a bit of a country bumpkin, even though he was a lawyer. On October 25, 1764, they were married at the Smith's home in Weymouth, Massachusetts. They made their home in Braintree, Massachusetts. During the first 12 years of their marriage they had six children, starting just eight months after they were wed. Three girls and three boys, unfortunately their last child, a girl, was stillborn. John traveled extensively during the first four years of their marriage which left Abigail to run their farm and raise the children. Abigail and John wrote constantly when he was away and we have a wealth of documentation of their lives through these letters. John often wrote of his work, showing great trust in his wife, her knowledge and her ability to not gossip. In April of 1768, the family moved to Boston, moving three times through the next short while all in the Boston area. In 1771, he moved the family back to Braintree and a year later moved them back to Boston again. And yet again in 1774, as the situation in Boston became unstable he moved the family back to Braintree. During all of those years his job as a lawyer and then moving towards politics Abigail supported him. Abigail had all of the responsibilities of the home, children, and the finances. She made very wise investments, even investing in the Revolutionary War. Her investments helped the family even after her death. In 1784, Abigail, John, their son John Quincy (age 17), and daughter Nabby (short for Abigail, age 19) went to France. John had accepted a diplomatic post in Paris. They were there for nearly a year when John was appointed the first U.S. Minister to the Court of St. James's in Britain. Abigail had finally

gotten used to Paris when she had to move to London. Although she disliked London she fulfilled the duties of the wife to the Minister to the Court of St. James's very well. While they were in London she was appointed guardianship of Thomas Jefferson's daughter Mary (Polly). Abigail and Polly had a lifelong love and respect for each other.. In 1788, the Adamses moved back to their home near Braintree. In 1789, John Adams became the vice president of the U.S. to President George Washington, and Abigail his second lady. She was the first second lady in the United States and set a precedent that was hard to follow. In 1797, John became president and Abigail easily took on the responsibilities of first lady. Many expressed then, as well as today that she set the bar quite high for her successors. She was much more outgoing and active in politics unlike Martha Washington had been. She was often referred to as "Mrs. President" by her and John's opponents. In 1800, the White House was completed in Washington D.C. and she was the first, first lady to reside there. After John's defeat for his second term the family moved back to Braintree (now Quincy, Mass.). Now Abigail's concentration was on her son, John Quincy's political career, and John senior's ever failing health. While championing her son's political career and aspirations, Abigail kept in touch with Thomas Jefferson. She had reached out to Thomas after his daughter Polly had died. During this entire time she had raised her own children, her granddaughter Susanna after her father Charles had died, her other two grandchildren whose father John Quincy was Minister to Russia. Abigail's life was fascinating and trying, she accomplished so much in her life and so much of her life lives on in her letters and her legacy. Abigail passed on October 28, 1818, of typhoid fever just before her 74th birthday, and seven years before her son, John Quincy Adams, became president. She was the first Adams to be buried in the now family crypt, at the United First Parish Church (Also known as the "Church of the Presidents"), in Quincy, Massachusetts. Abigail's life, letters, and political viewpoint can be read in many books about her and her famous family.

- **Elizabeth Blackwell** - to break the glass ceiling for women and mankind in her courage, intelligence, tenacity, and resilience. On February 3, 1821, Elizabeth Blackwell was born in England. She had eight siblings, one younger sister named Emily who was the second woman in the U.S. to get a medical degree. Elizabeth is celebrated on her birthday every year, this celebration is National Women Physician's Day. She was the **first** woman to attain a medical degree in 1843, in the United States. After Dr. Blackwell received her degree she wrote the first thesis in a medical journal written by a female, on typhoid fever, published in 1849, in the "Buffalo Medical Journal and Monthly Review". Elizabeth, her sister Emily Blackwell - the **second** woman in the U.S. to receive a medical degree, and Marie Zakrzewska - the **third** woman to attain a medical degree in the U.S., founded the New York Dispensary for Poor Women and Children in 1853. In 1857, it was reopened as the New York Infirmary for Indigent Women and Children. It is still open today although in a slightly different location and under a different name. Elizabeth gave lectures about educating girls, organized nurses during the American Civil War, developed a medical school curriculum for women, and instituted clinical work for women in the medical field. She was active in social reform in the U.S. as well as Britain. She died after complications from a fall down a flight of stairs in Scotland after moving back to Britain where she had been born. She died May 31, 1910. Dr. Blackwell's

pioneering journey into the men's world of medicine broke down the walls for many women to be female doctors that broke down barriers of their own.

- **Nellie Bly** (Elizabeth Cochrane Seaman, born Elizabeth Jane Cochran) - once you read about her you'll know; she had the courage and strength to pave the way that no one had before her. Born May 5, 1864, in Cochran's Mills (now part of Burrell Township), Pennsylvania. One of sixteen children, ten half siblings from her father's first marriage and six more with his second wife. When Elizabeth was six her father died, he had been an assistant justice and the area was named for him, Michael Cochran - Cochran's Mills. In 1879, she enrolled at Indiana Normal School, now the University of Pennsylvania. She was unable to attend for longer than one semester due to financial issues. In 1885 after the passing of her father and her mother moving the family to Allegheny City, now Pittsburgh, Nellie read an article in the *Pittsburgh Dispatch* titled, "What Girls Are Good For". This article stated that the only purpose for girls was to keep house and birth children. This didn't sit well with her and she wrote a response to the paper under the pseudonym "Lonely Orphan Girl". The editor ran an ad trying to find her, thinking her writing was very passionate and expressive, offering the opportunity to write for the paper under the same pseudonym. She replied and agreed to write a piece titled "The Girl Puzzle". This article argued that not all women married and that there needed to be better employment opportunities for women. Next she penned an article titled "Mad Mariages", which tackled the subject of divorce and how it affected women. This article was written under the name she went by for most of her life as a journalist, Nellie Bly. At the young age of 21, she was writing for a large city newspaper and she had no journalistic experience or higher education. During her time as a journalist for the *Dispatch* she concentrated on articles about working women and writing an investigative series about women factory workers. The newspaper got negative feedback and the editor changed Nellie's work to the fashion section. This wasn't what she wanted and decided she would do something no woman had done before, become a foreign correspondent. First traveling to Mexico spending six months reporting on the culture of the Mexican people. After protesting another journalist's negative portrayal of the then dictator, Porfiro Diaz, Nellie had to leave the country or be arrested herself. Her next and more famous report, one that only the bravest would do, was to go undercover into the Women's Lunatic Asylum on Blackwell's Island (now Roosevelt Island). She had been hired by Joseph Pulitzer's newspaper the *New York World*, agreeing to do the piece, she fabricated a false identity and portrayed herself as insane. She went through quite a lot to give herself the false veil of one who is not in control of herself and crazy. She managed to convince the police, a judge, and a doctor, eventually being sent to Blackwell's Island and committed to the asylum. She experienced all there was in that horrible place; the deplorable conditions, the mental and physical abuses that the patients suffered. She spent ten days there and after release wrote her article, "Behind Asylum Bars". The article was so impressive that she was offered a permanent job as an investigative reporter. She went on to travel the world in record time writing from many locations that was yet another one of her famous journalistic accomplishments. She stopped writing for the paper for a brief time, writing 11 novels for Norman Munro's weekly *New York Family Story Paper*. It was thought that these novels were lost, but in

2021, they were rediscovered by the author David Blixt. Upon returning to the world of journalism she championed for the rights of women through her articles uncovering many abuses of women and immigrants and the corruption of politics. Her journalism career was so vast that it would be impossible for me to write it all here. She retired from journalism in 1895, at the age of 31, and married Robert Livingston Seaman who was 73. Robert was a millionaire in the steel industry. Unfortunately the marriage didn't last long, Robert died in 1904. For six years Nellie took over running his two large companies and creating two patents; one for a novel milk can and another for a stacking garbage can. Both the patents are in her married name, Elizabeth Cochrane Seaman. Eventually the call of being a journalist again was too great and she returned to her writing as a reporter for the *New York Evening Journal*. She covered many national stories including the Women's Suffrage Movement and the 1913, Washington D.C. Woman Suffrage Parade. She even went to the front lines and the trenches of World War I, being the first woman to report from the front lines of a foreign war, she was nearly arrested when they thought she was a spy. Nellie died of pneumonia in New York at the age of 57, on January 27, 1922. She is interred at Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx, New York City. The fascination of what this woman accomplished during her life and at the time she accomplished it is nothing short of miraculous. Many books are published about her and contributions to journalism and women.

Colorado:

- **Elizabeth Bonduel McCourt** (Baby Doe Tabor, Lizzie McCourt, Lizzy Doe, Elizabeth McCourt Doe) - for her strength and courage. Born Elizabeth Bonduel McCourt in September of 1854, in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, to Irish-Catholic immigrants Elizabeth Anderson Neilis and Peter McCourt. She was better known as Baby Doe Tabor. Elizabeth was called Lizzie as a child by her family. She grew up in a middle-class family, the fourth of eleven children. Her father was a partner in a clothing store and the owner of the first theater in Oshkosh. As a child Lizzie was very taken with the Catholic faith and her father doted on her. One of Lizzie's impressionable memories of a child was when there was a fire in the downtown district of Oshkosh and she was tasked by her mother to retrieve her father from his store. Her mother thought that he would never leave the store. Lizzie brought her father back to the meeting area where the neighbors had gathered to wait out the fire. Luckily this fire did not destroy their home or her father's business, but in 1875, they weren't so lucky. The family lost their home and Lizzie's father Peter lost his clothing store and his theater. She was a beauty at a young age and her mother forbade her to work to preserve her beauty for a wealthy husband. In 1876, after the fire Lizzie entered a skating competition in order to hopefully win the first prize to help her family rebuild. She won the prize, but also scandalized the community because of the skating outfit she had worn that showed glimpses of her legs. This is where her future husband, Harvey Doe first saw her. He was swept away by her beauty. The two courted and were married on June 27, 1877, to the unhappiness of her parents. Harvey was Protestant and not as wealthy as her family would have liked, not to mention that Harvey's father was in the mining business. After their marriage they quickly set off on a trip with Harvey's father to Colorado to look at his Fourth of July Mine in Central City. Harvey was given half ownership of it as a wedding gift. They spent their

honeymoon at Denver's American House Hotel at the corner of 16th and Blake streets in downtown Denver. They enjoyed the opulence of the hotel and Denver for two weeks of their honeymoon before heading to Central City to set up house. The house was nothing more than a one room cabin in a mining community. The cabin was a bit outside of the town of Central City where it was safer for a woman. The mining town was full of men who were miners, gamblers, and drinkers. Besides the single men there were single women who were mostly prostitutes living in boarding houses and brothels. The town did have one decent hotel and a store, but the rest of it was saloons and gambling houses. Lizzie found two friends, one in the town doctor's wife, and another, the owner of the store Jake Sandelowsky, nicknamed Sands. During the time Lizzie and Harvey were in Central City it became clear to Lizzie that Harvey was not cut out for any of this, not the mining, the bustling frontier, or the management of the mine. He became more reserved, started drinking, and at some point frequenting the brothels. Lizzie became pregnant with their first child at the age of 23. Harvey believed that the child was Jake's and moved out temporarily and to Denver. Lizzie followed him and in July of 1879 gave birth to a stillborn boy. Harvey's parents, being excited for the birth of their first grandchild moved to Denver to be closer to them. When they found out what was going on with Harvey and Lizzie and then the baby being stillborn they cut ties with them and moved to Idaho Springs. During Lizzie's time in Central City she would dress in men's clothing and help her husband out with his promise to his father to run the mines, Harvey being absent from the mine because he couldn't handle it Lizzie found that she loved the mine work. Harvey never got over the stress of the mining town or the thought that his wife was unfaithful and he continued to drink and visit the prostitutes in Denver. Lizzie caught him with a prostitute and filed for divorce on the grounds of adultery. A judge granted the divorce in 1880. By then the miners in Central City had been calling Lizzie "Baby Doe". After the divorce she didn't want to return to Oshkosh thinking she would shame her parents and become bored. She decided to go to Leadville. Sandelowsky was there and had given her money to come to Leadville. When she arrived he offered her a job in the store he had opened. She didn't want to work in a store thinking that it would be too boring. One evening in 1880, she met Horace Tabor in a restaurant. She told him her story and he gave her \$5000. She took part of the money and repaid Jake and knowing that the reason he had sent her the money and asked her to come to Leadville was because he wanted to marry her, she told him she would not marry him. Horace moved her into the Clarendon Hotel. They began seeing each other even though Horace was married to Augusta. Soon Horace moved Baby Doe to the Windsor Hotel in Denver. They were in love and he asked his wife Augusta for a divorce and she refused. At that point he stopped giving Augusta any money. He eventually went to Durango and filed for divorce, the divorce was not quite legal having something to do with jurisdiction and wording, but Horace and Baby Doe were secretly married anyway in St. Louis, Missouri, in September 1882. At that time neither of their divorces were legal, his was questionable and hers had not been recorded. In 1883, his divorce was finally granted and Augusta tried to sue him, but failed. They married publically on the 1st of March 1883. At that time Horace was 52 and Baby Doe was 28. This marriage was performed in Washington DC because Horace was a U.S. Senator and Baby Doe's family attended.

She wore a \$7000 gown and the “Isabella” necklace valued at \$90,000. Soon the couple returned to Colorado, Horace was not re-elected to the Senate, because of the scandal of their relationship and divorces and because of this Baby Doe was not accepted in polite society. In July of 1884, she gave birth to a daughter, Elizabeth Bonduel Lily Tabor. Five years later she gave birth to a second daughter, Rose Mary Echo Silver Dollar Tabor. A year later with the enactment of the Sherman Silver Purchase Act the Tabors, along with other silver miners hoped that the silver prices would stabilize, unfortunately by 1893, Horace lost his fortune. At the age of 65, Horace had to resort to being a mine worker. They had moved back to Leadville and the family lived in a boarding house. Until 1898, they lived in poverty. In 1898, Horace obtained a position as the postmaster in Denver and the family moved back, living in a room at the Windsor Hotel, within 15 months Horace’s health failed and he died. Rumor has it that on his deathbed he told Baby Doe to hold on to the Matchless Mine, their last asset. It seems odd from the records at the time, it seemed to be mortgaged. Baby Doe, only being in her mid-forties, soon decided to leave Denver and head back to Leadville and the Matchless. She and the girls moved to Leadville and while trying to find investors to get the mine back up and running, she took on domestic jobs to keep food on the table. She eventually sold the “Isabella” necklace to keep the mine running. Her daughter Lily moved to Oshkosh to live with her grandmother, taking care of her in her advancing years. Lily moved to Chicago after her grandmother died. When her mother and sister came to visit her after she had been married and had a daughter of her own, Lily claimed to barely know her sister. After Lily had left, Baby Doe and Silver moved to a small cabin on the property of the Matchless; it was an old tool shed that they turned into very rustic living quarters. It was located above Leadville in Little Strayhorse Gulch. Not much later, Silver started drinking and became promiscuous and Baby Doe found it necessary to send her to Denver. While in Denver, Silver wrote for the *Denver Times* and sent money regularly to her mother. Silver again started drinking and moved to Chicago. Unfortunately she fell in with a Chicago gangster and was found scalded to death in 1925. Baby Doe never believed that the woman they found was her daughter. It was at that time that Baby Doe turned to her religion, seeking penance for her extravagant lifestyle and believing all that had recently happened was punishment. For 35 years, she lived on very, very, little, eating stale bread, using burlap bags for footwear, and refusing charity from people. She would sometimes wander the streets of Leadville in rags. She would protect her mine with a shotgun. She had basically turned into a lost and crazy woman. In 1935, after a severe snowstorm the neighbors noticed that there was no smoke coming from the chimney of her cabin, and upon investigation found her dead and frozen to the floor. Her eventual interment was in Mount Olivet Cemetery in Wheat Ridge, Colorado with her beloved husband Horace. It is presumed that she was 81 at the time of her death. I find her life story fascinating, what a remarkably strong woman. The Conifer Historical Society Book Club will be reading, *The Silver Baron’s Wife*, by Donna Baier Stein, in October of 2024. I have already read the book and I am excited to share it!

- **Susan Anderson** (Doc Susie) - for her strength, courage, tenacity, and intelligence. born in 1869 in Indiana. Susan and her family moved to Cripple Creek, Colorado in 1890, during the gold rush. She graduated from the University of Michigan in 1897, and

returned to Colorado. She had difficulties as a woman finding a job as a doctor and moved frequently from Denver to Greeley, to Eaton, usually doing nursing and not doctoring. Finally she moved to Fraser where she was a bit more appreciated for her medical skills. She treated everyone from common townfolk to lumberjacks, ranchers, railroad workers, and miners. She was even called upon to be a veterinarian. She was a doctor that did house calls. During the winter months she would be seen heading out of her house very near the train tracks on snowshoes, sometimes not returning for one or more days depending on who and what she was going to treat. One instance found her at a ranch far out of town during a snowstorm to deliver a baby. Knowing the baby was due soon she stayed at the ranch for quite a while before the baby was born. Another time a young man had an accident with some explosives and another doctor from a neighboring town was called, his advice was to amputate the arm but Doc Susie arrived and disagreed with his recommendation and she saved the man's arm. Doc Susie became the doctor for the miners and railroad workers working on the Moffat Tunnel. During those times many of her patients were unable to pay her and she became destitute having to apply to be the Grand County Coroner. This job provided her with a steady salary and allowed her to remain in Fraser and continue to practice medicine. She treated many during the Spanish Flu pandemic in 1918. She also treated injured skiers from Winter Park. Doc Susie died in a rest home at the age of 91. She is buried in Cripple Creek. Dr. Susan Anderson has a very storied life and a wonderful book has been written about her life: *Doc Susie: the True Story of a Country Physician in the Colorado Rockies*, by Virginia Cornell. This book was one of the Conifer Historical Society's book club choices for 2022 and one of my personal favorites. A replica of a doctor's exam room with Doc Susie's implements of her trade as well as a tribute to her is located at the Cozens Ranch Museum in Granby, Colorado.

- **Owl Woman** - for her courage to walk the path to cultural amalgamation (even though she may not have completely understood at the time how that would affect the future), her tenacity, her ability to see beyond the current path in front of everyone, and her strength. Owl Woman was born Mistanta near the year 1810, she was born a Southern Cheyenne, her father White Thunder a well respected medicine man, and her mother Tall Woman. White Thunder had received a message from Heammawihio, their chief god, "other humans would come from a land far away across a big water. There would be war and many would die." This would be one of the reasons why the Cheyenne would allow inter-marriage with the whites, to help secure peace. The Cheyenne People known to themselves as, Tsistsista "The People". They had migrated from the Great Lakes region to become a great hunting culture of the High Plains, following the great herds of buffalo. There were approximately 45 separate tribes of Native Peoples on the High Plains, each with a separate chief. The Cheyenne, known as "Noble People" to the white man because of their honesty, honor, intelligence, and cleanliness; they bathed every day, even in the harshest winter weather. William Bent sought to marry a Cheyenne or Arapaho to help solidify trading relationships in the territory and peace between the whites and the original Peoples of the area. Bent, after getting to know White Thunder and his tribe and watching Owl Woman grow to be of marriageable age, sought to have her as his wife. To do so he brought many gifts to White Thunder in an

offer to ask for Owl Woman to be his wife. White Thunder agreed but as tradition William would get Yellow Woman, Owl Woman's sister, for a wife as well, William tried to explain without success that he only wanted one wife as was the custom of the white man. White Thunder made it clear that it was both or none. William agreed and explained to Yellow Woman that he would take care of her for the rest of her life, but his wife would be Owl Woman. Neither Owl Woman or Yellow Woman had a say in the marriage as was Cheyenne tradition. The wedding was a traditional Cheyenne wedding in either 1835, 1837, or 1838 (historians have documented all of these dates). Bent's Fort was built by William Bent (born in 1809, the husband of Owl Woman), Charles Bent (born 1799, and William's brother), Ceran St.Vrain (born 1802, and the son of a French aristocrat), in 1833. The three men realized that this was the right place for a trading fort. The most valuable of the trade items would be buffalo hides that the Native People would bring in, to trade for other supplies. They would pay the equivalent of 25¢ worth of supplies to the natives for each hide, and the hide would be sent back to St. Louis to sell for \$500-\$600. William Bent was known to the Cheyenne as "Little White Man" or sometimes "Gray Beard". William's and Owl Woman's marriage, although based on convenience, seemed to be a happy one. After their marriage they moved to the Fort. Owl Woman set up a teepee outside and that is where her and William would sleep. Owl Woman helped with relations between white men and the Native Peoples, by being an interpreter. She taught William the ways of her People, traveled with her husband and was known to help keep the peace in the region during turbulent times. During their marriage they had four children; Mary (Cheyenne name Ho-ka) - named after William's sister in St. Louis in January of 1838, Robert (Cheyenne name Octavi-wee-his) - named after William's youngest brother who had been recently killed in a raid by Comanches on his wagon train early 1842, George (Cheyenne name Ho-my-ike) - named after his older brother who had recently been appointed Governor of Santa Fe in the summer of 1843, and killed in a political war just months after his appointment), and Julia (Cheyenne name Um-ah) - born spring to summer of 1847, she was named for William's oldest sister. It was tradition during Cheyenne women's pregnancies that they could not eat meat. They believed that it would offend the soul of the animal and it would tell the other animals to stay away from the tribes. After the birth of Robert, William started to build two cabins on some property at Big Timbers about 45 miles east along the Arkansas River from the Fort, creating a ranch for the family. He thought that with the rising unrest that it would be better to move his family there. He would spend the summers commuting back and forth to the Fort and on his travels, but spend his winters there with his family. In the winter of 1845, William got a sore throat and by the end of November that year he was extremely ill with tonsillitis. Owl Woman was at his side constantly trying to heal him. A messenger came from the Cheyenne camp and saw William's condition and immediately sent for the medicine man. When the medicine man arrived he knew just what to do. With Owl Woman's help he fashioned a stick with a burr attached to the end of it. With that burr he scraped up and down William's throat, opening up the pus filled tonsils and his throat. William soon recovered and was up and festive for the Christmas celebrations. The next year 1846, William got word that the U.S. had declared war on Mexico. When this happened William was afraid of the easterners that would come west with their

prejudice, so for the time being he thought it would be safer to send his family to live with his wife's nomadic Cheyenne tribe, thus allowing him to concentrate on the war. In January of 1847, Charles, William's brother and partner in the Fort, was appointed Governor of the newly taken Santa Fe. By early that summer, Charles was brutally murdered. William was with his family at the Cheyenne camp when a messenger arrived to inform him of his brother's murder. Owl Woman comforted her husband and sent word to the other tribes. Immediately a war party had amassed to avenge Charles' death. William held them off by stating that the government had created this problem and the government would need to solve it and that there was no point in more battles. Owl Woman was relieved and consoled her husband the best she could. She was pregnant with their fourth child, not telling William that this time was very difficult and she was very tired. William left to tend to things at the ranch and the Fort. When he arrived at the Fort many of the people that had been living there had decided to leave and return to St. Louis to get away from the battles and unrest. William got things in order the best he could and headed to the ranch. After he had left the Fort the Cheyenne tribe arrived for the summer and set up camp outside the walls of the Fort like they did most summers. Shortly after arriving, Owl Woman went into labor. She and Yellow Woman who was attending her knew that it was taking too long and that this labor was more difficult than the other three had been so Yellow Woman sent for William. Owl Woman had another daughter, but Owl Woman died shortly after the birth. Unfortunately, William riding back to the Fort heard the mourning cries of the women and fearing the worst came across the tree where the Cheyenne had placed Owl Woman's prepared body to keep it away from predators until William returned and she could be buried. Seeing this, William was so stricken with grief that he didn't realize that some days had passed until Yellow Woman put his infant daughter in arms. It wasn't until then that he realized he did have a daughter. He looked upon her and named her Julia and handed her back to Yellow Woman. The two oldest Bent children, Mary and William were sent to St. Louis to live with William's family and get a white man's education, this was Owl Woman's wish too. And the two younger children, George and Julia were raised with their Cheyenne family. William married Yellow Woman and had one more son, Charley. Three of Owl Woman's and William's children; Robert (who unknowing of Chivington's intent led him to the Cheyenne and Arapaho encampment at Sand Creek), George and Julia (who were visiting the Sand Creek encampment along with Charley - Yellow Woman's and William's son) were at Sand Creek during the massacre on November 29, 1864. All survived and were granted 640 acres along the Arkansas River by President Grant. George had been shot in the hip, he recovered and rode with the Dog Soldiers for about a year and then worked as a Federal Agent as an interpreter. His letters have become a vital part of the history of the Cheyenne People and the events during his life. Mary survived, married a white man, took care of her father William until his death in 1869, had six children - all raised in the white culture, she died in 1818. Robert testified against Chivington for the massacre at Sand Creek, moved to Indian Territory, Oklahoma and died in 1889. Julia survived, married and sold her 640 acres to John Wesley Prowers and Amache Ochinee Prowers (another Cheyenne woman). Charley was saved by Silas S. Soule, joined the Dog Soldiers, and had even vowed to kill his father for betraying the Cheyenne, but

Charley died of a gunshot wound in 1867. *Owl Woman: Her life with William Bent*, by Sandy Dexter, is a book choice for the Conifer Historical Society's June 2024 Book Club.

- **Harriett Anna Fish** - her strength, tenacity, courage, and humor. Little is written about Harriet, she wasn't a famous woman, just a woman of substance, who through her own words wrote a book about her life as a mother and dedicated wife to a hard working man involved in the mining industry during Colorado's infancy. What we do know is that Harriet fell in love with George Backus and she moved from her home to Colorado to marry him and journey to the mining town of Telluride at the age of 20, in 1906. They had many adventures while in Telluride and later on the west coast. The story you should read for yourself, because anything that I would write would give away this wonderful story of a pioneering woman in the unforgiving mining towns of the early 20th Century. This book was the first biography that I read about the life of a woman in the Colorado mining areas. This book and *Doc Susie* are the two books that I always recommend for people to read about the early days of Colorado. They both are favorite books of mine. *Tomboy Bride: A Woman's Personal Account of Life in Mining Camps of the West*, by Harriett Fish Backus was a previous Book Club selection for the Conifer Historical Society.
- **Dr. Justina Ford** - her courage, tenacity, intelligence, and the ability to rise above the dictates of the times. Dr. Ford was not only a woman doctor in a growing Denver during the early 20th century, but also the first African-American female doctor in the U.S. She came to Denver and started practicing medicine in 1902, in a home in the Five Points neighborhood. She was unable to get medical privileges in any of the hospitals in Denver, but that didn't stop her from practicing medicine out of her two-story, brick home at 2335 Arapahoe Street in Denver for 50 years. She birthed 7,000 babies during her career, many still pride themselves by being part of the "Justina Baby Club", one of those babies is my own grandfather's brother. She practiced until her death on October 14, 1952, at the age of 81. There is a bronze statue of her at the downtown Denver light rail station and in 1985, she was inducted into the Colorado Women's Hall of Fame. If you would like to learn more about Dr. Justina Ford, there are many books available about her life and time in Denver. Her home was moved to 3091 California Street and is now the home of the Black American West Museum.
- ***And my top choice for Colorado: Rachel Staunton, also the one I talk about when asked** - for her ability to prove that women can and do pave the way in the west to become the friend, community leader, household manager, healer, and mother that inspired the women of her time as well as the women today. Born Rachel Hornbrook Bullard in West Virginia in about 1869. Dr. Staunton graduated from the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania in 1894, and then moved to Charleston, West Virginia and began practicing medicine. She met her husband in Charleston. She and Dr. Archibald G. Staunton were married on December 31, 1898. They remained in West Virginia and their one and only child, Francis, was born a year later. Sometime early in the 1900s, Archibald became ill with either pneumonia or tuberculosis and they decided to move to a drier climate. Archibald boarded a train for California and along the route the train stopped in Denver. He got off of the train and took a stroll through a park in Denver and having noted the drier air and favorable climate he sent for Rachel and

Francis. After they arrived it only took them two weeks to decide to move to Denver. By 1903, both Rachel and Archibald obtained their medical licenses to practice medicine in the state. They settled into a home in Denver and their medical offices were located in the Republic Building downtown. In 1918, after many trips to the mountains Rachel and Archibald decided to homestead the Staunton Ranch. Rachel and Francis remained at the ranch at least seven months of the year to fulfill the requirements for the homestead. During her time at the ranch it is believed that she ran a sanitarium of sorts for tuberculosis patients. The ranch was also used as a camp and many of the cabins still remain. Over the many years that the Stauntons lived on the ranch Rachel was known by her neighbors as a compassionate woman who truly cared about her patients. Rachel also was interested in natural remedies for illnesses as well as the study of hormones, which was evidenced by the large garden and plants that were dried in her home and medical journals in her belongings after her death. Rachel also had acquired many more homestead acres over the years, almost all of them in her name and not Archibald's. Rachel died in 1946 of heart failure and her ashes are interred in the mausoleum at Fairmount Cemetery. So much more on her life as well as the Staunton Ranch and Staunton State Park can be found in Bonnie Scudder's book, *The Secrets of Elk Creek*. This book can be purchased from the Conifer Historical Society and Museum and was a book club selection at an author night featuring Bonnie Scudder.

I can just imagine being able to speak to any one of the women I have discussed above. What wonderful insights might be gained from conversations with them. These women paved the way for so many of us to pave our way in this world.

I can tell you that the exercise in playing my little game with others has been a highlight of my conversations with family, friends, and strangers alike. It is a real ice breaker and the things that you can learn, about those that you knew little about, or have a deeper understanding of the people you know, with the new knowledge of who they would want to spend one day with.

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