



FAMOUS KENTUCKY WOMEN

The accomplishments of Kentucky women and the many contributions they have made to the growth and development of the commonwealth are significant.

Kentucky's early social reformers and educators were primarily female. As a result of their hard work and determination, the legal position of all women improved and educational opportunities expanded for children and adults.



Laura Clay



Lucy Harth Smith



Martha Layne Collins



Mary Todd Lincoln

However, women interested in medicine, government, or the arts faced more difficulties as they tried to enter these traditionally male-dominated fields. During the past 200 years, most women's successes came only after hard fights.

This publication provides some highlights in the lives of a select group of Kentucky women achievers. Hopefully, it will whet an interest to search out the stories of others.

PIONEERS

Even though few were recorded in history books, stories of pioneer women were handed down through diaries, letters, and word of mouth from one generation to the next. Every family could name a female member who was a keystone to the family structure. These hardy, resourceful, persistent women helped make permanent settlement of the area that became Kentucky.

REBECCA BRYAN BOONE (1739-1813)

Imagine what it must have been like to settle Kentucky during the 1700s. It wasn't easy, especially for Rebecca Bryan Boone and her daughter, Jemima, who are said to have been the first white women to become residents of Kentucky (others followed soon after).

Hardships and tragedies accompanied their arrival at Boonesborough on September 8, 1775. While en route from North Carolina, Rebecca's son James was killed by Indians. Within three years, Rebecca's husband, Daniel Boone, was captured by Indians. Thinking him to be dead, she returned to North Carolina with her children. After his escape from captivity in 1780, he brought his family back to Kentucky. They lost a son and another was seriously wounded in the massacre at Blue Lick Springs.

Rebecca died in 1813 in Missouri. Later, her remains and those of her husband were returned to Kentucky to be buried in Frankfort.

The historical notice Rebecca Boone has received has been through her husband, but she was a representative of the wives and mothers who lived lonely and heroic lives, enduring heart-rending bereavements in the settlement of the commonwealth of Kentucky.

JANE COOMES (c. 1750-1816)

Jane Coomes moved to Fort Harrod with her husband, William, in 1775 as a member of a group of Catholics from Maryland. Two years later she became Kentucky's first schoolteacher.

Jane used the primitive version of the old English Horn Book. The "book" was made of clapboard and was paddle-shaped with the handle whittled to fit little fingers. The alphabet and the Lord's Prayer were written crudely with berry juices and charcoal. Jane taught school at Fort Harrod about 10 years until she resettled in Nelson County.

ANN MCGINTY (? -1815)

Pioneer women needed imagination and skills to create clothing for their families. Sewing began only after the yarns were spun and woven into fabric. Ann McGinty, Kentucky's first clothing manufacturer, arrived at Fort Harrod in 1775 prepared to cope with the hardships of the new land. She came with her precious spinning wheel tied to her horse and plans for a loom folded in her pocket.

Ann wasted no time before she experimented with the many weeds and grasses that grew around the fort, searching for one strong enough to be woven into cloth. Until flax could be grown, she made a thread from nettle. She and her husband built a loom so she could weave fabric much like linen or linsey cloth. The cloth was dull in color so she used bark, berries, and nuts to give it brighter hues.

Ann shared her skills with other women at Fort Harrod. She taught them to spin, weave, and sew; to make household items from corn husks; and to make baskets from willow twigs.

JENNY SELLARDS WILEY (1760-1831)

Jenny Sellards Wiley, the well-known captive of Indians, was born on the border between Virginia and Kentucky. She, too, was well prepared for the rough life on the frontier, having learned from her father to do almost any kind of work. She was a strong wilderness woman—she knew the woodlands and was an expert with the rifle.

In October of 1789, Indians attacked the cabin in which she, her husband, her four children, and her brother lived. Three of the children and her brother were scalped. Jenny, who was pregnant, and her 15-month-old baby were taken captive by the Shawnee. Later, after seeing both babies killed, she was sold to a Cherokee who planned to take her away with him to his home on the Little Tennessee River.

One night she was left alone, bound with strips of buffalo skins. During a dream, a white man she had watched burn at the stake appeared, told her it was time to escape, and gave her directions to a frontier settlement. That night it rained and the wet thongs stretched enough for her to escape. She took with her a tomahawk and a knife. After 18 hours of wading creeks, being pursued by Indians, and coping with many obstacles, she reached the settlement.

Jenny returned to her husband and home in Virginia where they lived for 12 years. They then resettled in Kentucky near the area where she was held captive. A state park bearing her name is now located nearby.

Jenny, who gave birth to five more children, died in 1831 at the age of 71, a remarkable age for a frontier woman.

REFORMERS

Always extremely conservative, Kentucky approached social reforms very cautiously. Suffrage, the right for women to vote, was largely an upper-class issue, and the Kentucky women who were leaders for reform were wealthy, influential, and educated. Most of them had graduated from Eastern colleges. (The temperance movement—the fight to eradicate alcohol—was closely allied with the early suffrage movement.)

As early as 1800, women pushed for a better legal position, but Kentucky was backward in regard to women's rights. Since Kentucky had not seceded from the Union, after the Civil War it did not have the favorable constitutional revisions that women in the Confederate states had.

In Kentucky, a married woman had no property rights. She couldn't make a will. If she did own property, all of it became her husband's. She could not make contracts, sue, or be sued. If she took a job, her husband had the right to collect her wages. He had sole guardianship over their children, even if she left him and even over an unborn child. The husband could separate the children from their mother if he wished and, in case of his death, could will their guardianship to some other male.

In 1894, decades behind most other states, Kentucky passed a married women's property law, as well as laws that allowed women to make wills, serve on the board of directors, and keep their own wages.

CARRY NATION

(1846-1911)

Carry Nation was one of the most notorious crusaders of the temperance movement. She was born

in Garrard County and lived for short periods in Boyle and Woodford counties.

Carry's dislike for alcohol was probably influenced by her observance of the effects of heavy drinking on her neighbors and family. Her first husband was an alcoholic who died young. Her daughter also had a problem with alcoholism.

Carry Nation became famous for her "hatchetations," her name for smashing saloons as she carried her hatchet and sang hymns. She sometimes was accompanied by a hand organ playing an entirely different song. Her opinion of the law was reflected in her practice of addressing judges as "your dishonor."

Carry was a journalist as well, publishing *The Hatchet* and *The Smasher's Mail*. She also wrote her autobiography, *The Use and Need of Carry A. Nation*.

LAURA CLAY

(1849-1941)



Laura Clay

Although Laura Clay's father, Cassius Clay, was well known as a great emancipationist who spoke out

loudly for the abolition of slavery, he had no such concerns for the rights of women. During Clay's long absences abroad (he was ambassador to Russia), the family estate, White Hall in Madison County, became a profitable enterprise due to Mrs. Clay's shrewd management of her time and money.

When Clay decided to divorce his wife after a 45-year marriage, she had no legal rights and was left with nothing to show for her years of work. This had a strong effect on Laura and her sisters and prompted them to become fervent workers for women's rights. Laura became a leader of the Kentucky Equal Rights Association and served as its president for 24 years. She also was a supporter of the temperance movement.

SOPHONISBA PRESTON BRECKINRIDGE

(1866-1948)

Sophonisba Preston Breckinridge was a sister to Madeline Breckinridge's husband, Desha. A brilliant woman, she was a lawyer and a pioneer in social work. She was the first woman admitted to the Kentucky bar. After practicing law in Lexington, she went to Chicago, where she earned a Ph.D. in political science. She was the first woman in her field to receive that degree. She served as dean and director of research at the Chicago School of Social Work. She also was president of the American Association of Schools of Social Work and has been credited for making social work a profession.

**MADLINE McDOWELL
BRECKINRIDGE**
(1872-1920)



Madeline McDowell Breckenridge

Madeline McDowell Breckenridge was the great-granddaughter of Lucretia Hart and Henry Clay, and a descendant of Dr. Ephraim McDowell. Two powerful families were joined when she married into the Breckenridge family. She used this position and her ability to lead others to influence the political powers opposed to change.

Her outstanding accomplishments included a much-needed change in child labor laws; state juvenile court system; tuberculosis sanitarium; park system in Lexington; and playground, model school, and settlement house for economically disadvantaged children. Madeline campaigned widely for the ratification of women's suffrage and used her husband's position as editor of the *Lexington Herald* to a great advantage.

EDUCATION

Although many of Kentucky's early educators were women, higher education often was difficult for them to obtain within the state. Berea College admitted women from its inception in 1855, and although State College (which later became the University of Kentucky) allowed coeducation at an earlier date, the first woman did not graduate until 1888.

Native Kentucky women often went out of the state for their schooling, and many of the state's female founders of educational institutions came from other areas.

JULIA TEVIS
(1799-1880)

Julia Tevis was born near Winches-ter in Clark County in 1799. She was educated in the Washington, D.C., area but returned to Kentucky as the bride of a Methodist minister.

She and her husband established Science Hill Academy in Shelbyville in 1825, answering a need for an institution of higher education for women. Her students were from all over the country.

Instead of confining the curriculum to traditional "female subjects," Julia added natural sciences, emphasizing that these subjects were appropriate for women students as much as they were for men.

After Julia retired, the school continued to operate under the direction of Dr. Wiley T. and Clara M. Poynter. Science Hill Academy closed in 1939.

KATHERINE PETTIT
(1868-1936)

Katherine Pettit was a native of Lexington, but her life work took place in the mountains of southeastern Kentucky. Hearing of the hardships and primitive mode of living endured in the Pine Mountain country, Katherine made her first visit

to the area in 1895. She determined that education was the key to upgrading the family conditions existing in the isolated area, so she began the first rural social settlement work ever undertaken in the country.

Classes in cooking, sewing, home nursing, Bible, and singing were begun. The classes often were followed by socials and parties. The work was so successful that Katherine was sought out to do the same for mountain folk in the vicinity of Hazard. The Hindman Settlement School and the Pine Mountain Settlement School at Hazard became models for similar schools in other states, and the work of Katherine Pettit became widely known.

CORA WILSON STEWART
(1875-1958)



Cora Wilson Stewart

Cora Wilson Stewart was elected superintendent of county schools in 1901 at age 26. In 1911, she was elected to head the Kentucky Education Association and was the first woman president of the association.

Cora was born near Morehead in Rowan County in 1875. She was educated at Morehead Normal School, and later at the National Normal

University in Lebanon, Ohio. She began her teaching career at age 20 in a one-room school in Rowan County.

Adult illiteracy concerned Cora, so she began an adult education program known as the Moonlight School. The school was named Moonlight because most of its students were employed during the daytime and could attend only at night. Local teachers volunteered to work without pay. The number of students who enrolled showed the success of the program. Cora expected 150 students to enroll the first year; instead, 1,200 enrolled. The second year, 1,600 enrolled. At the end of the third year, the illiteracy rate had dropped dramatically. The Moonlight School became a model for adult education throughout the world, and Cora Wilson Stewart received national and international prominence.

LUCY HARTH SMITH (1884-1955)



Lucy Harth Smith

Lucy Harth Smith devoted her life to improving conditions for Kentucky's African American people. She was the principal of the Booker T. Washington Grade School in Lexington from 1935 to 1955 and

was the only woman ever to serve as president of the Kentucky Negro Education Association. Among her national projects was her promotion of the study of African American history in schools.

Concerned with the health of African American children, she raised funds for a facility called The Colored Health Camp. Located on a farm, the camp benefitted frail, undernourished children, who were invited to visit for two weeks at no cost to their parents.

SOPHIA ALCORN (1883-1967)

A teaching method for deaf and blind children is used universally today thanks to Sophia Alcorn, a native of Stanford, Kentucky. A foremost educator of the disabled, Sophia developed the Tad-Oma Method to teach deaf and blind children to speak through the sense of touch.

A child, by placing his hand upon the teacher's cheek, is able to feel through vibration what the teacher is saying. He then learns to associate the vibration with names, places, objects, or actions. This method enables a child to learn to speak clearly by copying the teacher's vibration pattern. The speech of the deaf and blind child then results in normal patterns. Sophia developed her method while teaching at the Kentucky School for the Deaf in Danville.

MEDICINE

Concern for the high mortality rate of mothers who bore a lot of children, as well as concern for the children, attracted women to the medical field. These women saw the health needs of rural Kentuckians and considered them a great challenge. The women realized that healthy babies needed healthy families, so they expanded the medical services to treat all family members.

LUCY DUPEY MONTZ (1842-1922)

Lucy Dupey Montz, born near Warsaw, Kentucky, became Kentucky's first woman dentist.



Lucy Dupey Montz

Becoming a dentist was a mid-life career change for Lucy Montz. She was a wife and mother and later became a public schoolteacher. After a few years as a teacher, she decided to attend the Cincinnati College of Dental Surgery and graduated with honors in 1889. She then became a member of the faculty of the school. She later left, at the age of 51, to enter practice in her hometown of Warsaw.

Dentistry was an almost unheard-of profession for women during the late 19th century. This is substantiated by the fact that Lucy was listed as the only woman dentist in Kentucky at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. She continued her dental practice in Warsaw until failing health forced her to retire in 1921.

LILLIAN H. SOUTH*(1879-1966)*

Lillian H. South was born in Warren County, Kentucky. Her father was a Bowling Green physician. Lillian studied nursing at a Patterson, New Jersey, hospital and received her M.D. degree from the Women's Medical College in Philadelphia.

Lillian was credited with the elimination of many diseases within the state, especially hookworm. She also carried out inoculation campaigns against scarlet fever, malaria, smallpox, typhoid, and leprosy. During the 1937 flood, her laboratory supplied the entire state with the vaccine for typhoid.

For 39 years, she was director of the State Board of Health's laboratory services and taught at its School of Laboratory Techniques, which she founded in 1922.

MARY BRECKINRIDGE*(1881-1965)*

Mary Breckinridge was a cousin of Sophonisba and Desha Breckinridge. Her father, a Lexington native, was a six-term congressman from Arkansas and a minister to Russia while Grover Cleveland was president. She was educated in European schools.

Mary was married in 1900 but after six years was left a widow. The life of a social butterfly did not appeal to her and she felt unprepared for any kind of service, so she attended nursing school in New York City. She soon remarried and became the mother of two children, each of whom died very young. Mary was so devastated that she dissolved her marriage, resumed her maiden name and went to England to study midwifery because there was no such school in the United States.

Deeply concerned with the high death rate of the women and babies in the mountains of eastern Kentucky,

*Mary Breckinridge*

she decided that location would be her mission field. She returned to Kentucky in 1925 and organized the Committee for Mothers and Babies. In 1928, this group became the Frontier Nursing Service in Leslie and Clay counties, where there were no physicians. The Nursing Service led to the opening of a hospital in Hyden, Kentucky.

In addition to helping mothers and babies, Nursing Service volunteers helped many adults who had illnesses. They also were responsible for inoculating many adults and children against disease. The Mary Breckinridge program was so successful that it brought people from around the world to work and observe. Mary traveled widely to spread the stories of her work. Through her wisdom and deep concern for humanity, a strong health program for eastern Kentucky was established.

GOVERNMENT

Women were elected to public office in Kentucky even before they were allowed to vote. Four women were elected county school superintendents in 1889, eight in 1893, and 18 in 1897. Offices at the

state level were yet to come, although women's organizations were united in an effort to secure voting rights. Women gained the right to vote in 1920. Since that time, a number of Kentucky women have been prominent in government.

MARY ELLIOTT FLANERY*(1867-1933)*

Mary Elliott Flanery, the first woman to serve in a southern state legislature, was born in Carter County. She began her professional life as a teacher in Elliott and Carter counties and, in 1904, became a correspondent with the *Ashland Daily Independent*. Her career in government began with her election in 1921 to the

*Mary Elliot Flanery*

Kentucky House of Representatives.

While in office, Representative Flanery introduced the bill which created Morehead State Teachers College. She also was a sponsor of the Sheperd-Towner Maternity Act. For many years, Mary devoted her efforts to women's suffrage and to the betterment of education in the state. In 1922, the Kentucky State Historical Society named her Kentucky's most prominent woman.

EMMA GUY CROMWELL*(1869-1952)*

Emma Guy Cromwell was the first woman in Kentucky to be elected to a statewide office. From that day forward, her goals were to increase women's involvement in politics and to prove that women could be effective politicians.

As a newly elected state librarian in 1886, Emma soon realized a woman's entrance into politics caused controversy. However, she became even more determined to hold her job.

She ran for secretary of state in 1923 and won. She credited much of her success in being elected to support from Kentucky women. At one time during her term, Emma was acting governor during the absence of both the governor and the lieutenant governor. This was another first for a woman in the commonwealth.

Her lengthy career in public service included the offices of state treasurer, state parks director, and state bond commissioner. Throughout her many years in politics, Emma was continually challenged as a woman blazing new territory, but, through the respect she achieved in a "man's world," she opened the way for other women in Kentucky politics.

THELMA STOVALL*(1919-1994)*

Thelma Stovall, a native of Hart County, was active in advancing the status of women in Kentucky and was elected as Kentucky's first female lieutenant governor in 1975.

Early in her career, she was elected secretary of the Tobacco Workers International Union, Local 185, and held that position for 11 years.

Lieutenant Governor Stovall held many firsts in Kentucky politics. She was the first woman to hold elective political office from Jefferson County, being elected

state representative from the 38th legislative district for three terms (1950-55). She was elected secretary of state for three terms (1956-60, 1964-68, and 1972-75). She was elected state treasurer two terms (1960-64 and 1968-72).

MARTHA LAYNE COLLINS*(1936-)*

Martha Layne Collins became Kentucky's first female governor in 1983, having already served as lieutenant governor and clerk of the Kentucky Court of Appeals.

*Martha Layne Collins*

Governor Collins was born in Bagdad, Kentucky, and was educated in Shelby County schools. She received a bachelor of science degree in home economics from the University of Kentucky in 1959 and was a public schoolteacher for several years. Her introduction to politics involved support for other candidates, and she filled party chairmanships on local, state, and national levels.

**MUSIC, ART,
AND
LITERATURE**

Kentucky women are represented in all phases of the arts. They have been especially proficient as writers, depicting the different cultural segments within the state. Their contributions in the music field have been equally diverse.

MUSIC**ROSEMARY CLOONEY***(1928-)*

Rosemary Clooney was born in 1928 in Maysville, Kentucky, and became a member of the record bestseller lists in 1951. She began her career as a vocalist with her sister, Betty, on a Cincinnati, Ohio, radio station. She then toured the United States for three years with Tony Pastor's Orchestra, and became a popular singer. Her warm, husky, versatile singing voice made her recordings of ballads, dialect songs, and children's tunes equally possible. She also appeared in motion pictures, including the classic *White Christmas* in 1954.

Rosemary married actor-producer Jose Ferrer in 1953 and is the mother of five children. She and Ferrer later divorced.

Her autobiography, *This For Remembrance*, written in 1977, discusses her life and the problems she faced as her career diminished.

LORETTA WEBB LYNN*(1935?-)*

Loretta Webb Lynn often has been referred to as the "Queen of Country Music" and also is known affectionately as the "Coal Miner's Daughter" (after the song she wrote and recorded).

Loretta was born sometime around 1935 (she doesn't reveal the exact date) to an impoverished coal miner, Ted Webb, and his wife in the coal-rich mountains of Johnson County. She married and was a mother at age 14. She was a grandmother at age 29.

Her husband, Mooney Lynn, bought her a Sears Roebuck guitar in the late 1950s and played a big role in introducing and managing her musical career. She became a composer and an entertainer and first appeared on the Grand Ole Opry on October 15, 1960. Loretta's warm, unaffected personality and her ability to touch the hearts of her audiences with songs that reflect their own problems have endeared her to country music fans throughout the world.

ART

HATTIE H. HILL

(1847-1921)

Hattie H. Hill was born in Bourbon County. Her work consisted mostly of still lifes, landscapes, and marine pictures. Among the portraits painted by Hattie was a life-sized portrait of William Garth, the famous judge of Bourbon County. All of her portraits hang in the Bourbon County Courthouse.

PATTY THUM

(1853-1926)

Patty Thum was Kentucky's first well-known female artist. She was born in Louisville.

Patty graduated from Vassar College and studied under William Merit Chase in New York City. She returned to Louisville during the mid-1870s and painted landscapes, still lifes, and portraits. She also established a reputation as a book illustrator. Patty was considered one of the best painters of flowers, especially roses, of her period. For many years she was an art critic for the *Louisville Herald*.

ENID YANDELL

(1870-1934)

Enid Yandell was a native of Louisville who became a world-renowned sculptor. She graduated from the Cincinnati Arts School and studied in New York City and France. She became well known for her work at the Chicago Columbian Exposition in 1893 and was one of three women to receive the Designer's Medal.

Enid became famous for fountains, busts, memorials, and other works throughout the world. One of her memorials that can be seen in Kentucky is the likeness of Daniel Boone in Louisville's Cherokee Park. Her rise to distinction came at a time when women in sculpture were a rarity, and she was given the honor of being the first woman member of the National Sculpture Society.

LITERATURE

ALICE HEGAN RICE

(1870-1942)



Alice Hegan Rice

Alice Hegan Rice, the creator of "Mrs. Wiggs," was born in Shelby County, Kentucky. In 1902, she married a poetic dramatist, Cole Young Rice, of Louisville, with

whom she sometimes collaborated in her writings.

Also a prolific writer by herself, her book, *Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch*, written in 1901, was listed as a best-seller for more than a year and is now in its 47th edition.

ELIZABETH MADOX ROBERTS

(1886-1941)

Elizabeth Madox Roberts was born in Perryville, Kentucky. She received a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 1921. Her writing career began at an early age when she won the Fisher Prize for a collection of poems she wrote while still an undergraduate. Some of her prizes for excellence included the John Reed Memorial Prize in 1928, the Poetry Society of South Carolina Prize, and the O'Henry Memorial Volume in 1930.

Her first novel, *The Time of Man*, established her reputation as a first-rate novelist. From then until shortly before her death, she wrote a book each year. The book, *The Great Meadow*, is said to be an authentic source of historical fact.

HARRIETTE LOUISA SIMPSON ARNOW

(1908-1986)

Harriette Louisa Simpson Arnow was born in Wayne County. She received her education in the Burnside, Kentucky, public schools, Berea College, and the University of Louisville, from which she was graduated. Harriette became a teacher in the public schools of Pulaski County and later in Louisville. She married Harold Arnow, a newspaper reporter, in 1939. After a period of living on a farm and developing her writing skills, they moved to Detroit, Michigan.

Harriette was well known for her novels *Mountain Path* (1936), *Hunter's Horn* (1949), and *The Dollmaker* (1953). Her books

presented characters and their locale in realistic terms. Her experiences in the hills of Kentucky were portrayed in just the proper measure of folk ways and folk traditions. *The Dollmaker* was made into a television movie starring Jane Fonda in 1984.

FAMOUS KENTUCKY WIVES

A group of Kentuckians who made outstanding contributions to the state and nation through steadfast support of their husbands cannot be overlooked. Many of these early wives endured hardships and sacrifices in their private lives due to their mates' long absences.

SUSANNAH HART SHELBY (1764-1833)

Susannah Hart Shelby was born in North Carolina but moved with her family to Kentucky in 1779. They settled near Boonesborough. Susannah married Isaac Shelby on April 19, 1783, within the fort at Boonesborough and became the first Kentucky first lady when he was elected governor in 1792. Governor Shelby served a second term from 1812 to 1818. The Shelby home, Traveler's Rest, was well known for its hospitality to travelers on the Old Wilderness Road.

LUCRETIA HART CLAY (1781-1864)

Lucretia Hart Clay was the wife of Henry Clay, one of Kentucky's first major statesmen. During most of her husband's long absences in Washington, D.C., first as senator, then as Speaker of the House and Secretary of State under John Quincy Adams, she remained at Ashland, their Lexington plantation, to rear their family. She gave birth to 11

children, but only seven reached adulthood. All of her six daughters died young: two in infancy, two at 12 and 14, and two in their 20s. The Clays were also responsible for the upbringing of several of their 29 grandchildren. Lucretia was credited as a force in helping her husband sustain his political and personal disappointments throughout their 53 years of marriage.

MARY TODD LINCOLN (1818-1882)



Mary Todd Lincoln

Mary Todd Lincoln was the only Kentuckian to be first lady of the United States. She was born in Lexington and grew up in a home on West Main Street. She and her husband, Abraham Lincoln, whom she met at a cotillion in 1839, were strongly contrasted in backgrounds and social savvy as well as their differences in height—he was 6 feet 4 inches tall and she was 5 feet 2 inches.

Perhaps the greatest contributions made by Mary were her steadfast confidence in her husband's ability and her help in polishing his social graces and broadening his knowledge about social conditions and politics. During the early years of their marriage, she served as an advisor

and confidante. Her life as first lady was a constant conflict. She was suspected by Southerners as a Union president's wife and the Northern press thought of her as extravagant and pushy. Lincoln's biographies were generally unkind in their portrayal of her.

Her husband's assassination plus the deaths of three sons left her so bitter and grief stricken that she was sometimes thought to be insane. After spending several of her later years in Europe, she returned to Springfield, Illinois, where she had met and married Lincoln. She died there in 1882.

OTHER FAMOUS KENTUCKY WOMEN

SALLY WARD LAWRENCE HUNT ARMSTRONG DOWNS (1827-1896)



Sally Ward Lawrence Hunt Armstrong Downs

One of the foremost leaders in the social world of the antebellum South was Sally Ward. Born on a Bluegrass farm located on North Elkhorn Creek, she grew up in Louisville, where her family moved

when she was a child. Her father, Robert Ward, was a very wealthy and influential man. He raised his daughters in luxury and sent them to an eastern finishing school to be educated.

Sally was termed a “social pioneer” and sponsored many innovations. Among those attributed to her were the first fancy-dress ball in her section of the country, the first use of cosmetic additives by a “lady of standing,” the first offering of orchestral music to dinner guests in New Orleans where she lived during her pre-Civil War marriage to Dr. Robert Hunt, the first apartment established in Louisville, and the first use of opera glasses.

During her reign as a social queen, her name was applied to many things. There was a Sally Ward slipper, a Sally Ward walk, a Sally Ward lavender. Steamboats, racehorses, and children were named for her. She also was known as a fine musician. She spoke fluent French and contributed stories to some Eastern journals about her travels and collections of religious and historical treasures.

Widowed twice, divorced once, she married a fourth time before her death in Louisville in 1896.

BELLE BREZING

(1859-1940)

Belle Brezing was well known as the madam of one of the finest “houses” in the South and served as the prototype for Belle Watling in the novel *Gone With the Wind*. Belle had been the queen of Lexington’s “red light district” at the turn of the century and reached the status of a local folk legend. She was reported to be an extremely sharp, but fair businesswoman and was known for her generosity to charitable causes in the community.



Belle Brezing

A play, *59 Megowan Street*, dramatized her sad and often lonely life. It was based on a biography written by Lexington writer Buddy Thompson. The book *Belle Brezing* is documented with photographs and memorabilia.

(Belle Brezing's name is commonly spelled Breezing; however, research indicates that she used only one "e.")

MARGARET INGELS

(1892-1971)

Margaret Ingels of Paris, Kentucky, was the first woman in the United States to receive a mechanical engineering degree.

After graduating from the University of Kentucky in 1916, she worked for the Chicago Telephone Company but soon transferred to Carrier Engineering Corporation in Pittsburg. She then earned her advanced professional degree in mechanical engineering—also a first for a woman—from the University of Kentucky.

Margaret was well known in the field of air conditioning and began an extensive lecture circuit in an effort to educate the public. She also published research articles on air conditioning and wrote a biography of Willis Carrier, who was a pioneer in the field.

CISSY GREGG

(1903-1966)

Cissy Gregg was a home consultant and foods columnist for the *Louisville Courier-Journal* for 20 years. Her color food photographs in the newspaper’s magazine section were very popular. Cissy was a graduate of the University of Kentucky with a degree in home economics and was a proponent of the theory of controlling health through diet. She was a native of Harrison County.

MARION MILEY

(1914-1941)

Marion Miley was an outstanding golfer who played in the major women’s golf tournaments all over the world. In 1937, she defeated the famous Babe Didriksen in the Augusta Invitational.

Her career, however, was ended prematurely. Marion was murdered early on the morning of Sept. 28, 1941, by assailants who entered the Lexington Country Club for the purpose of robbery and were surprised by her and her mother. Her mother died later from wounds received on that date. The three men were executed for the murders of Marion and her mother.

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