

N.J. women who made their mark on history

By Lynn Wenzel
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This is National Women's History Week, and what better way to learn history's lessons than to see where the events took place?

New Jersey has plenty to offer in this regard. Within a short drive are numerous former homes, birthplaces, or graves of some New Jersey women who have made history — in medicine, the arts, and advancement of women's rights before the feminist movement.

None of these sites is more than a two-hour trip, and a number are only 15 to 30 minutes away. Although many sites are open to the public, a few are private residences and owners would appreciate not being disturbed.

NEWARK:

Clara Maass Monument, Fairmount Cemetery, Central Avenue and 11th Street.

Clara Maass, the daughter of poor immigrant parents who lived in East Orange, became a nurse and volunteered to serve with the U.S. Army in Cuba and the Philip-

pines. In 1901 she went to Cuba specifically to work with those trying to discover the origin of yellow fever. Voluntarily, she submitted to a bite from the mosquito suspected of carrying malaria. Ten days later she was dead, the only American and the only woman to die in the experiment. Her sacrifice, however, helped begin the program to wipe out malaria.

Ann and John Plume House, 407 Broad St.

During the American Revolution, Ann Van Wagenen Plume found some Hessian soldiers breaking up her furniture to build

a fire. She swiftly imprisoned one of them in an icehouse nearby, and then delivered him to officers of the Continental Army.

BORDENTOWN:

Patience Wright House, 100 Farnsworth Ave. (private residence).

The nation's first sculptor lived in this three-story red brick house. In 1769, the widow and mother of five had gained fame in cities throughout the colonies with her wax figures. When she moved to London in 1772, she became a close friend of Benjamin Franklin and of the king and queen of England. A plaque on the house recalls her

activities as a spy during the Revolution, an activity she carried out while sculpting a life-size figure of William Pitt, the first American work to be placed in Westminster Abbey.

Clara Barton Schoolhouse, 142 Crosswicks St.

In 1852, in this brick cottage, Clara Barton founded one of the first free schools in the state. Within a year, her classroom grew from six pupils to 600. Bordentown officials decided to build a new three-story

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schoolhouse. They decided as well to install a male principal to oversee Barton's work. She resigned in protest.

FREEHOLD:

Molly Pitcher's Spring, Wemrock Street, off Route 522.

From this spring, during the Battle of Monmouth in 1778, the wife of artilleryman John Hays carried water to the American soldiers. When John Hays was shot down, Molly took up his post, loaded the cannon, and fought on bravely. She maintained her post, chewing tobacco and swearing like a trooper, and helped bolster the American victory.

The Monmouth Battle Monument at 70 Court St. is a large stone pillar. One of the bronze plaques around its base pictures Molly and her pail in bas-relief.

HADDONFIELD:

Site of Elizabeth Haddon House, 201 Wood Lane (private residence).

The founder and proprietor of Haddonfield was a 21-year-old Quaker who came from England in 1701 to manage land her father had purchased. Elizabeth and her husband, John, moved to the site in 1713. A three-story brick house built in 1842 occupies the spot where Elizabeth's yellow-brick house stood at the center of town. Here, she managed the family property while her husband, a missionary, traveled.

The brew house she built in 1713 still stands in the backyard. In it, Elizabeth made medical and chemical preparations, acting as a doctor to her neighbors. For 20 years after

John's death until her own, Elizabeth maintained her leading role in the town and managed her own property as well as the estates of others.

The Elizabeth Haddon Memorial Tablet was erected at the Old Friend's Burial Ground, Haddon Avenue, in 1913. Attached to a tree is a plaque indicating Elizabeth's burial "near this tablet."

The Historical Society of Haddonfield, 343 King's Highway East, has Elizabeth's wooden mortar, marriage certificate, and Common Prayer Book.

TENAFLY:

Elizabeth Cady Stanton Home, 135 Highwood Ave. (private residence).

In 1868, Elizabeth Cady Stanton bought this home and lived there 19 years, writing the first three volumes of her "History of Women's Suffrage Movement." In 1880, she attempted unsuccessfully to vote in the place of her husband as a Tenafly resident. She was accompanied by Susan B. Anthony during the attempt.

HILLSIDE:

Mary Mapes Dodge Grave, Evergreen Cemetery, 1137 N. Broad St.

Mary Mapes Dodge wrote "Hans Brinker and the Silver Skates" and was an editor of *St. Nicholas*, the children's magazine. Mrs. Dodge, a widow with two children, created the classic that was translated into foreign languages and printed in more than a hundred editions. She died in 1905.

NUTLEY:

Site of Annie Oakley House, 303 and 306 Grant Ave.

Two new houses stand on the site where Annie Oakley and her husband, Frank Butler, lived from 1893 until her death in 1926.

The Historical Society Museum at 65 Church St. has several of Annie Oakley's guns and some letters.

PRINCETON:

Annis Boudinot Stockton House, "Morven," Stockton Street.

The Georgian mansion, home to New Jersey governors from 1956 until 1981, was once home to Annis and her husband, Richard, secret signer of the Declaration of Independence. Annis moved to Princeton in 1755 and was an acclaimed and patriotic poet, best known for the song that welcomed George Washington to Trenton as he traveled to his first inauguration. It begins: "Welcome mighty chief, once more/ Welcome to this grateful shore,/ Now no mercenary foe/ Aims again the fatal blow. . . ."

TRENTON:

Trenton Psychiatric Hospital, Sullivan Way.

Dorothea Dix came to New Jersey in 1844 and was horrified at the treatment of the mentally ill in New Jersey. Her moving report, presented to the state legislature in 1845, persuaded lawmakers to seek reforms. Three years later, the New Jersey State Lunatic Asylum with 86 patients opened its doors on the site chosen by Dix herself, which overlooked the Delaware River. It was the state's first such hospital.

When Dix became ill in 1881, she was provided with an apartment in the building and was treated there until her death in 1887.

WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP:

Monument to Peggy Warne, Old Mansfield Cemetery, Cemetery Hill Road.

Peggy Warne, 1751-1840, was known as the most skilled and accomplished obstetrician of her day. She cared for her own nine children as well, while driving her horse across two counties in rain or shine to treat the sick of all ages until her death at age 89.

JERSEY CITY:

No. 11 School, Bergen Avenue (now Martin Luther King School).

In 1878, Mary Philbrook attended the primary grades at No. 11 School (first set up in the loft of a fire house). After high school, she attended Drake Business College in Jersey City. A course in stenography completed her schooling.

On June 6, 1895, Mary Philbrook passed the written and oral examinations with honor and became the first woman admitted to the New Jersey Bar. A tireless worker all her life for women's rights, Philbrook also was active in the suffrage movement with Alice Paul.

She spent the last active years of her life in New Jersey working for an equal rights amendment to the state constitution. She died in 1958 at the age of 86.

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