

March 16, 2015

Women quietly do extraordinary things every day. To help shed light on the resilience and strength of Hoosier women and celebrate their accomplishments and contributions to history we are releasing an article every day in the month of March. These articles showcase how women have moved Indiana and our country forward and who inspire others to do great things in their own lives.

Women in Indiana have an important role to play. You can make a difference by:

- Learning more about the issues affecting women in Indiana.
- Voicing your opinion on issues important to you
- Serving as an advocate for women
- Mentoring another woman
- Join ICW's mailing list or social media outlets to be notified of upcoming events, programs and resources available to women

Go to www.in.gov/icw to learn more about the Indiana Commission for Women and their current initiatives.

Sources:

- **History of the Indiana State Historical Marker Program**
(<http://www.in.gov/history/ProgramHistory.htm>)
- **Indiana Bicentennial Commission**
(<http://www.Indiana2016.org>)
- **Indiana Historical Bureau**
(<http://www.in.gov/history/2368.htm>)
- **Indiana Historical Marker Dedication**
(<http://www.in.gov/history/2351.htm>)

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Women's History Month 2015

Telling 31 stories in 31 days this March.

Commemorating Indiana Women with State Historical Markers

The predecessor of the Indiana Historical Bureau (IHB), the Indiana Historical Commission, was established in 1915 and tasked with preparing and executing plans for the 1916 Centennial celebration of Indiana's admission to statehood. Indiana women made "tireless efforts" to promote and provide programming for the 1916 Commemoration. Some of these women are listed in the March 13, 1916 *Weekly Newsletter* of the Indiana Centennial Commission which is excerpted in the [Looking Back](#) section of the Bureau's [Marking Hoosier History](#) blog.

With little funding and enormous energy, the nine Commission members—including [Miss Charity Dye](#)—encouraged cities, counties, individuals, groups and historical organizations to mark state and local historical sites with monuments, plaques, tablets and memorials. The Indiana General Assembly ended the Indiana Historical Commission in April 1925 and delegated many of its duties to the newly created Indiana Historical Bureau—including recognition of significant persons, places, and events in Indiana's past.

A formal state marker program was not established until 1936 when a Works Progress Administration (WPA) project for marking Indiana history was approved and funded. More than 2,200 signs were installed between 1936 and 1942, when most of the metal signs were collected for World War II scrap iron drives.

After the war, in 1946, a more permanent marker was designed; this [format](#) is still used today. More than 500 Indiana State Historical Markers stand along streets and highways throughout the state. New State Markers are added to the collection each year via a [competitive application](#) process.

State historical markers commemorate important people, places, events, and organizations in Indiana history. Several of these markers commemorate women's contributions to the state. Since 2000, the IHB has worked with individuals and organizations in several Indiana counties to install 23 State Historical Markers recognizing women and their contributions. Just a few of the topics include: [women aiding escape of slaves](#); [women escaping slavery](#), [widows of Civil War veterans](#), [native women](#), [factory workers](#), [Indiana's First Women's Rights Convention](#).

The most recent women's history marker, sponsored by the Indiana Supreme Court, was dedicated on November 10, 2014, in Lafayette, Indiana, commemorating [Helen M. Gougar](#) and her contribution to the suffragist movement in Indiana and the U.S. She also sought acceptance for women to practice law and be admitted to the bar. She argued for "The Constitutional Rights of the Women of Indiana" before the Indiana Supreme Court in 1897, one of the earliest women to do so.

To see a listing of state historical markers commemorating women's history, see the Indiana Historical Bureau's [Markers by Topics](#) web page.