



Women's History Month

Sources:

- The American Presidency Project (www.presidency.ucsb.edu)
- Law Library of Congress' guide to the legislative history of Women's History Month (<http://womenshistorymonth.gov/>)
- National Women's History Museum (www.nwhm.org)
- National Women's History Project (www.nwhp.org)
- U.S. Government Publishing Office (www.gpo.gov)

Women have always been a part of history. A few of their stories are remembered. Too often, the role of women in history is overlooked and undervalued. In 2015, the National Women's History Museum (NWHM) commissioned a study to determine Americans' knowledge of our nation's heroines, both historical and contemporary. The study revealed fewer than one in four Americans consider themselves knowledgeable about notable women and their accomplishments.

However, leaders and organization have worked diligently over the years to write women back into history. Thirty-five years ago, President Jimmy Carter became the first President to urge American citizens to recognize the importance of women's history. On February 28, 1980, he issued a presidential statement, designating March 2-8, 1980 as National Women's History Week.

Throughout the next five years, Congress continued to pass joint resolutions designating a week in March as "Women's History Week." By 1986, 14 states had already declared the entire month of March as Women's History Month. This momentum and state-by-state action was used as the rationale for women's groups led by the National Women's History Project to lobby Congress to declare March 1987 as National Women's History Month. Between 1988 and 1994, Congress passed additional resolutions requesting and authorizing the President to proclaim March of each year as Women's History Month. Since 1995, every president has issued a series of annual proclamations, designating the month of March as "Women's History Month."



Porter County, IN, suffragists carry their "Votes for Women" banner in parade, circa 1919. Photo Courtesy: Indiana Historical Society