



Women Make History:

Stories we should have learned in school

"We are not first of all Americans, we are, first of all, human beings; we are, first of all, God's children, and we have identical interests with all God's children all over the face of the earth."

*Lucia True Ames Mead
Feminist. Pacifist. Author. Mentor.*



Global Visionary

At an early age, [Lucia True Ames Mead](#), 1856 – 1936, adopted a global perspective of allegiance to humanity, rather than to political boundaries formed by nations. She opposed elitism in all forms and dedicated her life to social, educational, legal, and economic equality for all. Her activism included education reform, women's suffrage, and racial equality, but she is best known for her work as a pacifist. A renowned public speaker, she also authored newspaper and journal articles, and published seven books including one novel.

Born in New Hampshire in 1856, Lucia moved to Boston at fourteen to receive a more formal education. A dedicated and rigorous scholar, she pursued independent studies in literature, history, theology, and philosophy. Eventually she studied with [William Torrey Harris](#), one of the country's leading philosophers. When Harris was unavailable,

Lucia led his discussion groups. In addition, she developed and taught her own courses for women and earned a reputation among Boston's academic circles for her keen intellect. On more than one occasion, she traveled to Europe with scholars from Harvard and MIT to study educational methods—a part of her quest to bring about education reform in the U.S.

In 1897, before the League of Nations and the World Court were founded, Lucia addressed a high-profile group of business, academic, and community leaders who advocated for [international arbitration among nations](#). It was her first speech on global peace, but it crystallized her views and catapulted her into the international spotlight.

Lucia was a pragmatist and believed that women were key to cultural, educational, and economic change. Amid the rising tide of nationalism pre-and post- World War I, she stood firm in her views despite criticism that she was “unpatriotic.” In her role as co-founder of the Women’s Peace Party, she served as national secretary and delegate to several international pacifist organizations.

Lucia’s ability to confront intolerance began early. In 1878 at the age of 22, she was denied membership in a local church because of her beliefs. In 1926 she was barred from speaking at a Georgia college because of her “radical” views. Those radical views included racial equality. Lucia’s parents were abolitionists. A friend of [W.E.B. Du Bois](#), she supported the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People ([NAACP](#)) which Du Bois founded. Lucia became a pen pal, mentor and friend to Emmanuel M. Brown, a young Black student in Alabama. In 1904 he founded the [Street Manual Training School](#) for African Americans which remained open until 1971.

Lucia was also a suffragist and served as president of the Massachusetts Woman Suffrage Association from 1903 – 1909. Like many early feminists, she eschewed marriage to maintain her independence but she changed her mind in 1898. Her future husband convinced her that they could make a bigger impact as a couple, than apart.

Lucia never had children of her own, but she was a mentor to her niece, Mary Ware, (later [Mary Ware Dennett](#)). Not long after the photo of Mary (at right) was taken, Mary’s father was diagnosed with cancer. Mary then went to live with her maternal Aunt Lucia in Boston.

Mary Ware Dennett carried her aunt’s legacy into the world through battles for women’s rights. But that’s another story.





Rescuing 19th Century Treasures from the Family Attic

Speaking of Mary Ware Dennett, I'm thrilled to share my essay, [Apologies Marie Kondo, But Let's Not All Rush To Tidy Up](#) published in the March / April issue of New Hampshire Magazine. It's the story of how I discovered Mary Ware Dennett and why sometimes it's better to procrastinate, rather than toss!

I hope you'll join my campaign to write Mary back into our history and our collective consciousness. As part of [Women's History Month](#), I'm launching a national campaign to have Mary's many accomplishments and stories included in museums and historical organizations. Sign the [Card](#). Share the Newsletter. Follow me on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#) for inspiration about the women we should have learned about in school.

Bring it Home: Conversation Starters

Lucia Ames Mead had the courage to stand up for women's rights, for equal opportunity, and for world peace even against the crushing tide of nationalism prior to WWI.

Ask a Friend: When did you last muster your courage for what you believe in?

Women's stories and histories have been in the shadows too long.

Ask yourself: What actions can you take to bring their stories to life? Can you share their stories with your children? Your grandchildren? Your friends?



[Sharon Spaulding](#) discovered the hidden story of Mary Ware Dennett, suffragist, sex-ed and reproductive rights activist, after she married Dennett's greatgrandson. Last year, [Time magazine](#) included Dennett as one of the most important women in American history.

Sharon has spent ten years researching first-wave feminism, the battle for reproductive rights, and Mary's life in the context of politics and social mores from 1914–1947. She received a grant from Radcliffe College's Schlesinger Library to support her research and the creation of a manuscript. Her journalism has appeared in BOLD and Utah Stories. She lives near Salt Lake City with her family and dog, Gus.

Sharon is available to speak on the forgotten stories of remarkable women and the history of the suffrage and reproductive rights movements in the early 20th century. Contact her at: Sharon@SharonSpaulding.com.

Help reclaim the lives of remarkable women. Share the newsletter and invite others to subscribe. Follow me on social media. www.SharonSpaulding.com

