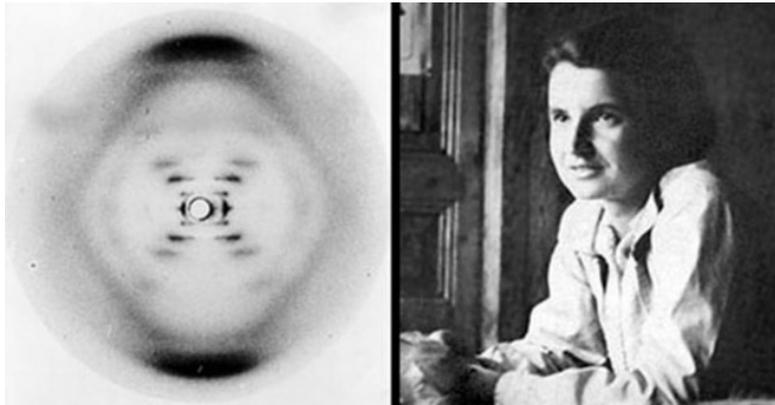




Women Make History:

Stories we should have learned in school

Ever Heard of Rosalind Franklin? *She Knew A Lot About You.*



In 1952, scientist Rosalind Franklin photographed the double helix of DNA. Only in recent years has she begun to be recognized for her significant contribution to the discovery of DNA.

Rosalind Franklin died in 1958 at age 37, four years before American biologist James Watson, English physicists Francis Crick and Maurice Wilkins received the Nobel Prize for their discovery of DNA.

Yet, it was Franklin who first uncovered and photographed DNA's unique double helix. Without her knowledge or consent, Franklin's colleague, Wilkins, shared her images with Watson and Crick which confirmed their theories.

Although Nobel prizes are only awarded to the living, Franklin was never credited for her crucial role. Learn more about this remarkable woman and her many achievements, by reading Professor Mark Lawler's article published in [*The Conversation*](#).



Phillis Wheatley began writing poetry at age fourteen.

**“Her soul enlarg'd to
heav'nly pleasure springs,
She feeds on truth and
uncreated things.”**

Phillis Wheatley (1753-1784)

“Despite spending much of her life enslaved, Phillis Wheatley was the first African American and second woman (after Anne Bradstreet) to publish a book of poems,” according to Dr. Debra Michals in an [article](#) published by the National Women’s History Museum.

Captured by slave traders in Gambia at about age seven, she was brought to America in 1761 and sold to the Wheatley family in Boston to help with domestic duties. They educated her along with their two children and in less than two years, she “could read the Bible, Greek and Latin classics, and British literature.”

Her first collection of poetry was printed in 1773. To prove that the volume was penned by a black woman, it included a forward signed by John Hancock along with her portrait. Soon after, the Wheatley family granted Phillis her freedom. Although she supported the American revolution, she believed that slavery would be a stain on the new country. She married, but died in childbirth in 1784. Read the [poetry of Phillis Wheatley](#).

**"This girl, who is to my
knowledge very
unpleasant and we might
even say a high-grade
bitch, can write rings
around all of us who
consider ourselves as
writers ... it really is a
bloody wonderful book."**

Ernest Hemingway



Beryl Markham

The Glamorous Bad-Ass

In 1936 Beryl Markham (1902-1987) became the first person to make a solo, non-stop flight across the Atlantic from Europe to North America. Because the plane is traveling against prevailing winds, the east-west route requires more stamina, time, and fuel. Markham chose this route because it hadn't been done.

Unlike Charles Lindbergh, who received a Fifth Avenue ticker-tape parade for his westerly crossing, there were no celebrations for Markham. Storms and icy fuel tanks forced her to land on the boggy soil of Nova Scotia, instead of a New York airfield. Still, she achieved what many had died trying to accomplish.

Born in England, raised in Kenya, the glamorous non-conformist achieved many firsts. The first female bush pilot to fly over the uncharted jungles of Africa, she was also the first woman to train racehorses in Kenya and later she became a Hollywood stunt pilot.

Markham's memoir, *West with the Night*, won unabashed, albeit sexist, praise from Ernest Hemingway on its release in 1942. Her tales of growing up motherless among the wilds of British Africa, became a *New York Times* bestseller in 1983 when it was reissued. Ten years later, six years after her death, she was again robbed of the credit she deserved. Biographer Errol Trzebinksi alleged that it was Markham's third husband, a Hollywood ghost-writer, who had penned the famous book. Markham's first biographer strongly disagreed. While the controversy remains, one fact is clear: Beryl Markham boldly embraced the world on her own terms and broke records doing it.

Bring it Home: Conversation Starters

Rosalind Franklin said, "In my view, all that is necessary for faith is the belief that by doing our best we shall succeed in our aims: the improvement of mankind." Ask yourself: Do you agree? Why or Why not?

Beryl Markham said, "I learned what every dreaming child needs to know, that no horizon is so far you cannot get above it or beyond it." Ask a friend: What horizon have you scaled? Which horizons seem elusive?

To paraphrase Phillis Wheatley, ask yourself or a friend: How do you nourish your hunger for truth?



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

Sharon has spent ten years researching first-wave feminism, the battle for birth control 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 her dog gus.

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

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