

# PRESS RELEASE

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from *The National Museum of Women's History (NMWH)*

## HERE'S THE REST OF THE STORY

The *National Museum of Women's History* is pleased to present the first CyberMuseum dedicated to Women's History, located at [www.nmwh.org](http://www.nmwh.org).

"On behalf of the Board of Trustees of *The National Museum of Women's History* let me thank **Bell Atlantic** and **O Interactive** for their partnership with us in making this CyberMuseum a reality. Today we unveil the initial exhibit and structure of our museum as a first step in telling the rest of the story." announced Karen Staser, President of NMWH.

"Have you ever wondered why the accomplishments of women who make up the majority (53%) of the population only make up 2% of the content of history books? Always thought it was because women were at home, cleaning, cooking and sewing while the really important and exciting stuff of history was being made elsewhere? Prepare for your paradigm shift. Prepare for some real surprises and wonderment at the remarkable accomplishments of women through the ages both in, and outside, the home." said Ms. Staser.

While Elizabeth Cady Stanton was at home raising her seven children, she was also fomenting revolution. In fact her *Declaration of Sentiments*, written at home 150 years ago, set in motion the largest bloodless revolution to that time. That revolution was the beginning of the fight for

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Women's rights such as the basic right to vote. Our first full exhibit in our CyberMuseum is dedicated to the images and artifacts of that fight in celebration of the 150th anniversary.

Some history books have mentioned Stanton but have boiled the fight for Suffrage down to "In 1920 women were *given* the right to vote." Women weren't given anything. They fought long and hard for the right for 72 years.

But there is a chance you've actually heard of Elizabeth, but what about Catherine Littlefield Greene? At her home they raised cotton, *lots of it*. She came up with this concept of a cotton gin to make the processing easier. A friend of her and her husband's, Eli Whitney, who was a Massachusetts farmer (they don't grow much cotton there) was visiting them and he helped her perfect this invention. Funny, her name still doesn't ring a bell does it?

You would receive the same surprise if you learned that the person with the highest I.Q. ever recorded was a female, Marilyn Vos Savant (she's on our National Advisory Board) or, that the first female millionaire in the U.S. was an African-American, Madame C.J. Walker, or if you learned more about Trotula of Salerno (11th century Italy) who was the first known person to write down preventative health information. She was in many ways "The Mother of Medicine." Healers used her texts for the next 700 years in medicine. She was known in history books but someone copying her text (probably a monk) changed her name (and thus her sex) to Trotulo, instead of Trotula. How about Hildegard de Bingen or Hypatia of Alexandria? In many ways they were much like Leonardo di Vinci - true renaissance persons but these women lived centuries before him; Hildegard in the 12th century AD and Hypatia in the late 300's and while their accomplishments are known, their names are not.

There are hundreds if not thousands of examples of women like this who individually helped change the course of civilization. That's why we have launched our efforts initially through this

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CyberMuseum since in cyberspace we won't have the limitations of space. NMWH does have an active agenda that includes building an actual physical museum to house the histories of many of the most prominent women and their artifacts (with a concentration on American women).

But while we wait for the bricks and mortar to dry we can be sending out over the airwaves for all to read and download, information on all of women's history, whether it be through our site as primary source, or linking with other sites nationwide and worldwide.

But the history of women is not just about individual women. There is much to be celebrated about their impact as a group. Were you aware of the impact of the matrilineal clan system of the Iroquois that Jefferson credited for giving him the concept of the relationship between states and a central Federal government? Did you know that the invention of textiles by prehistoric woman was in many, but different, ways as important as the invention of the wheel?

Yes there is much of the rest of the story that needs to be told. And women have been trying to tell the rest of the story for centuries. Heard of Christine de Pisan? Born in 1364, de Pisan is the first person known to have documented and to have tried to bring women's history into mainstream culture. In her work, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, she compiled information about past heroines and their contributions to the world. Now, with the help and partnership of great companies like **Bell Atlantic**, and because of the internet, it looks like NMWH can finish what Christine started to do over six centuries ago.

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