

# Lessons from dead feminists – how women make a difference

*"To show what she has done. I have gathered from the records of the world the names and histories of all distinguished women, so that an exact estimate of the capabilities of the sex might be formed by noting what individuals have accomplished through obstacles and discouragements of every kind." – Sarah Josepha Hale, 1853*

So wrote Sarah Josepha Hale, of Newport, New Hampshire, the Granite State's most famous feminist, the editor of Godey's Lady's Book. With its circulation of 150,000 prior to the Civil War, Hale became possibly the most influential woman in 19th century America.

In addition to her famous periodical, Hale also wrote a 900-page book on women's history. She published her book



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in 1853 – titled *Woman's Record: Or, Sketches of all Distinguished Women, from 'the Beginning' till A.D. 1850. Arranged in Four Eras. With Selections from Female Writers of Every Age.* It took Hale three years to write. Hale dedicated her book to "The Men of America" so they might learn "what a woman can do."

Before heralding April's arrival, I wanted to high-

light some exciting new contributions to women's history as of 2019.

The year 2020 will mark the centennial of the 19th Amendment. That is the amendment which prohibits denying citizens the right to vote "based on sex," a major milestone in the suffrage movement, albeit a fight that, at the time, primarily benefited white women. The Women's Suffrage Movement (Penguin Classics) anthologizes the wealth of writing related to the social crusade that changed the nation, through letters, speeches and articles from celebrated suffragettes as well as pieces on Native American and African-American women about the experiences of minority women.

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Sarah Josepha Hale