

Virginia Women's Monument: *Voices from the Garden*

The Twelve Bronze Statues and Their Stories

The twelve women chosen to be depicted as bronze statues in the Virginia Women's Monument represent women from all corners of the Commonwealth, both widely-celebrated women, as well as those with previously unknown, but equally important, stories. Many more women will be memorialized on the Wall of Honor and in the accompanying virtual educational modules.



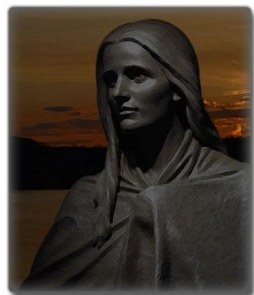
Ann Burras Laydon (ca. 1594 – ca. 1636) - Jamestown

Ann Burras, a 14-year-old maid to Mistress Forrest, arrived in Jamestown in 1608 aboard the *Mary and Margaret*. Ann and Mistress Forrest were the first two female settlers in the colony. When Mrs. Forrest died, Ann married carpenter John Laydon, in what is believed to be the first wedding held in the colony. She and John had 4 daughters—Virginia, Alice, Katherine and Margaret. She was employed as a seamstress and at one point Gov. Thomas Dale is reported to have ordered her beating because of the unsatisfactory quality of the shirts she had made. As a result of the punishment, she suffered a miscarriage. Ann survived both this harsh treatment and the winter of 1609-1610, known as the “starving time”, demonstrating her resilience and fortitude.



Cockacoeske (fl. 1656 - d. 1686)—Jamestown

Cockacoeske, (pronounced Coke a cow ski) was a Pamunkey chief, and descendant of Opechancanough, brother of the paramount chief Powhatan. Upon the death of her husband Totopotomoy, chief of the Pamunkey circa 1649-1656, Cockacoeske became queen of the Pamunkey. In 1676, a few months before Bacon's Rebellion, the insurrection's leader Nathaniel Bacon and his followers attacked the Pamunkey, killing some of Cockacoeske's people and taking others captive. An astute politician, Cockacoeske signed the Treaty of Middle Plantation on May 29, 1677, reuniting, under her authority, several tribes that had not been under Powhatan domination since 1646, as well as establishing the Pamunkey Reservation. Cockacoeske ruled the Pamunkey for 30 years until her death in 1686.



Mary Draper Ingles (1732-1815)—Southwest Virginia

Born in Philadelphia, she moved as a teenager with her family to southwestern Virginia as a part of the Scots-Irish migration. They eventually settled on farm lands where Virginia Tech is now located. She married William Ingles in 1750. In July 1755, along with her two sons and other settlers, Mary was taken captive, during the French and Indian War, by Shawnee Indians, who took them to Kentucky. She escaped and travelled 600 miles back to her home. The stories of her captivity and escape have inspired books and movies, making her an American folk legend. Mary also established the Ingles Ferry on the New River, a business that was vital to her rural community.



Martha Dandridge Custis Washington (1731-1802) - Fairfax

Martha Washington was born in New Kent and lived her entire life in Virginia. Widowed at age 25, she married George Washington in 1759. While she was not referred to as First Lady, she was the first woman to hold the position, while George Washington was president. She is known for providing the support and strength her husband needed to serve both as the commander-in-chief of the Continental Army and as the first President of the United States of America. While other First Ladies may have defined the role and achieved greater recognition, Martha Washington can stand as a representative for all of the wives of our Virginia-born presidents.



Clementina Bird Rind (1740-1774)—Williamsburg

The first issue of the *Virginia Gazette* appeared in May 1766, and shortly after, the assembly chose William Rind as public printer to the colony. In August 1773, a week after her husband's death, Clementina Rind took over the editorship and business management of the press, all without missing a single issue. As editor, she was careful to preserve the integrity pledged in the motto, *Open to ALL PARTIES, but Influenced by NONE*. Under her editorship, the paper began to assume its place as a form of a literary journal, revealing her interests in scientific developments and educational opportunities, particularly in regard to the College of William & Mary. It is clear that Clementina valued her female audience, as the paper included poetic tributes to women and news reporting with a feminine slant. In May 1774, the House of Burgesses appointed her public printer in her own right, and continued to give her printing press all public business, in spite of competing bids.



Elizabeth Hobbs Keckley (1818-1907)—Dinwiddie, Petersburg

For the first 30 years of her life, Elizabeth Keckley was enslaved. During this time, she was separated from her family and reportedly beaten for having an independent mind. In 1852, while living in St. Louis, she bought freedom for herself and her son. Soon afterward, she returned east to Baltimore, working as a seamstress. She ultimately settled in Washington, D.C., establishing her own business. After she made a dress for Mary Custis Lee, wife of Robert E. Lee, other prominent women began to notice her, increasing her business. Mary Todd Lincoln hired Elizabeth, and she became her seamstress and confidant during, and after, the White House years. Elizabeth established an organization called the Contraband Relief Association, which provided food, clothing, shelter, and emotional support for recently freed slaves and wounded soldiers, setting a standard for relief organizations of the time. Elizabeth wrote her autobiography *Behind the Scenes: Or, Thirty Years a Slave and Four Years in the White House* and her character is featured in the Steven Spielberg film *Lincoln*.



Sally Louisa Tompkins (1833-1916)—Mathews Co.

Sally Tompkins was born and raised at Poplar Grove in Mathews County. She moved to Richmond with her family, following her father's death. She founded a small hospital at the corner of Third and Main Streets, due to the influx of soldiers into Richmond, after the Battle of First Manassas. The network of private hospitals proved too costly and inefficient for the Confederate government to oversee, and officials ordered all but military hospitals closed to soldiers. Sally, however, convinced the government that her hospital's record for returning soldiers to health was unsurpassed. As a result, she was commissioned a captain in the Confederate army, allowing her hospital to remain open. Captain Sally, as she was affectionately called by many of the 1,300 soldiers she treated, established Robertson Hospital in Richmond at a time when few, if any, women held such a leadership position. Sally is lauded for the remarkably low mortality rates she maintained as a hospital administrator and she is credited with helping to develop nursing as a skilled profession as well as setting standards for hygiene, which continue to inspire medical community practices even today.



Maggie L. Walker (1864-1934)—Richmond

Maggie Walker was born and raised in Richmond and attended the Richmond Colored Normal School. She taught for several years, while also working for the humanitarian Independent Order of St. Luke, eventually rising to a position of national leadership, serving as Right Worthy Grand Secretary. She established the organization's newspaper, the *St. Luke Herald*, and chartered its first bank, the St. Luke Penny Savings Bank. She became the bank's president, and consequently she was the first woman bank president and founder in the United States. Maggie Walker was an important community leader, dedicated to improving life for African Americans and women, and working to improve race relations in the early 20th-century. In her later years, she was confined to a wheelchair. Despite her limitations, she continued as chairman of the bank and her leadership of the Independent Order of St. Luke, until her death in 1934.



Sarah G. Boyd Jones (1866-1905) - Richmond

Sarah Boyd Jones was born in Albemarle County and raised in Richmond. She graduated from the Richmond Colored Normal School, becoming a teacher. In 1888, her marriage to Miles B. Jones, a fellow teacher, prevented her from continuing her teaching career, so she entered Howard University Medical School, earning a medical degree in three years. She returned to Richmond and became the first woman to pass Virginia's medical board examinations. Sarah established a medical practice, offering free daily one hour clinics for women and children. She and her physician husband helped found a medical association for African-American doctors opening a hospital and nursing school in 1903. That school became known as the Richmond Hospital Association and Medical College and Training School for Nurses Inc. It was later renamed the Sarah G. Boyd Jones Hospital and eventually became Richmond Community Hospital. In 1905, at the time of her death, she was the only black woman in the Commonwealth practicing medicine.



Laura Lu Copenhaver (1868-1940) - Smyth Co/Marion

Laura Copenhaver helped expand southwestern Virginia's agricultural economy, as director of information for the Virginia Farm Bureau Federation, by emphasizing cooperative marketing of farm products in order to improve the standard of living for farm families. Laura practiced these strategies by coordinating the production of textiles, hiring women to produce coverlets based on traditional patterns and using local wool. Eventually these productions led to the founding of the internationally-known business Rosemont Industries and many of the same families continued to sell their handicrafts through Laura Copenhaver Industries for generations. Laura continued the family tradition of service to the Lutheran Church by writing fiction, poetry, and dozens of church pageants; one of her poems, *Heralds of Christ*, even became a well-known hymn. Her advocacy inspired the Women's Missionary Society to establish the Konnarock Training School, which provides elementary-level academic and religious education for Smyth County children, who did not have access to other public schools.



Virginia Estelle Randolph (1875-1958) - Henrico

The child of former slaves, Virginia Estelle Randolph completed her education at the age of sixteen and took her first teaching job in Goochland County. In 1892, she began teaching at the Mountain Road School, in Henrico County, where she developed a unique approach to education, creating a successful formula based on practicality, creativity, and involvement from parents and the community that became a national model called the Henrico Plan. Her work took her throughout the South, earning her both a national and international reputation as a leader in education. In 1915, the Virginia Randolph County Training School, a new high school for African Americans, was constructed in Virginia's honor. Almost a decade later, a girls' dormitory was opened on three acres Virginia purchased, next to the school, to provide housing for thirty students. Demonstrating her unwavering benevolence, the 1930 census lists fourteen "adopted" sons and daughters, ranging in age from eleven to nineteen, living in her household.



Adele Goodman Clark (1882-1983) — Richmond

In 1901, Adele Clark graduated from the Virginia Randolph Ellett School (known today as St. Catherine's School) and was awarded a scholarship to the Chase School of Art (today's Parsons School of Design). She was one of the founders of the Equal Suffrage League of Virginia, serving as its secretary. In 1920, the newly organized League of Women Voters selected Adele as its first chair. She became president of the League in 1921 and held the position for 19 years. In 1924 she was elected to the board of the National League of Women Voters, as director of the third region, which included Washington, D.C., Virginia, and other southern states and in 1926, Adele became Dean of women at William & Mary. Throughout her life, Adele supported Richmond's art community and was instrumental in the establishment of the Virginia Art Commission, serving as a member from 1941-1964. She is considered to be one of the founders of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.