Celebrating Women’s History Month at CHS

Standing strong (and looking good doing it) has long been a woman’s role in Connecticut.

Hartford, CT (March 5, 2013) March is Women’s History Month, a month of celebrating and remembering the role women played in our history. Connecticut women have always been stalwart beacons and strong contributors to both our state and the nation. From the well known heroines (Prudence Crandall, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Isabella Beecher Hooker, Katharine Houghton Hepburn, Ella Grasso) to the lesser known, such as Sybil Ludington (a 16 year-old girl who, much like Paul Revere, went on a horse ride to quickly spread the message of the British burning Danbury on the night of April 26, 1777), Connecticut women have been trailblazing and standing up for what is right for centuries. The contributions to art, fashion and business by women such as Prudence Punderson, Elizabeth Hart Jarvis Colt, Florence Griswold, Beatrice Fox Auerbach are also significant and worthy of celebrating.

Emily Seymour Goodwin Holcombe (1852-1923) is one of Connecticut’s true champions who taught the people of Hartford, Connecticut, and our nation, about the grace and wonder of “The Constitution State.” She advocated for saving the Old State House, preserved the Ancient Burying Ground and spearheaded urban renewal in Hartford, which gave her the nickname “The Gold Street Lady.” Her passion, activism and hard work inspired generations after her to do the same. On the night of March 20 (5:30 pm), Holcombe’s life and contributions will be celebrated as noted historian and lecturer, Bill Hosley, shares the story of the woman who stood up for Hartford and Connecticut.

On a lighter note, CHS will be hosting a special themed Behind-the-Scenes Tour entitled “Women’s History Month--From Corsets to Spanx: Have We Come a Long Way, Baby?” Learn how women followed the latest fashions, but also fought against clothes that confined them as they argued for women’s health, freedom, and political participation. The 45-minute tour includes first-hand looks at original nineteenth-century garments such as corsets, hoops and dresses and original letters and manuscripts from women activists. Two tours will be held on Saturday, March 9 at 11 a.m. and again at 1 p.m. For reservations, visit chs.org/calendar.

Finally, the current CHS exhibit “Cooking By the Book: From Amelia Simmons to Martha Stewart” explores the culinary contributions of women including the first cookbook published in the U.S. by Amelia Simmons in Hartford, in 1796; Miss Beecher’s Domestic Receipt-Book, 1846, by Catharine Esther Beecher (sister of Harriet Beecher Stowe); Fannie Farmer’s The Boston Cooking-School Cookbook, where a scientific standardized approach to cooking first appeared in 1896; and Martha Stewart’s 1982 Entertaining, as well as others.

The Connecticut Historical Society is located at 1 Elizabeth Street in Hartford, in the West End. For more, visit www.chs.org or call (860) 236-5621.

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About the Connecticut Historical Society (@ConnHistSoc):

Founded in 1825, the Connecticut Historical Society is a non-profit museum, library, research and education center. CHS strives to inspire and foster a life-long interest in history and ignite a passion for learning about history through research assistance, exhibitions, tours and programs for all ages. Visit www.chs.org or call 860-236-5621.