MAIDEN MAIDENS:
FEMALE PIONEERS COMMEMORATED ON AMERICAN POSTAGE STAMPS

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United States postage stamps are significant beyond the fact that they provide the means for carrying mail throughout the world. These postage stamps tell the story of the American experience from Columbus' discovery of the new world to the two hundredth anniversary of the American constitution. The first official United States postage stamps, which featured George Washington and Benjamin Franklin, were issued on July 1, 1847. It was not until 1893 that a woman appeared on a U.S. postage stamp. Queen Isabella of Spain, who financially supported Christopher Columbus' search for a new shipping route to India, was depicted on several stamps of the Columbian Expedition Issue. She was featured prominently on one such stamp which contained portraits of both Columbus and herself. From 1847 to 1988 over 2400 U.S. postage stamps have been issued. Only ninety of these stamps have commemorated women and/or female-related subjects. Actually only seventy-four of these stamps feature different women or women-related subjects because the other sixteen stamps are reprints or slight variations of original stamps. An examination of U.S. postage stamps with female subjects reveals that several of these women were pioneers in one way or another. Other female subjects of postage stamps include presidents' wives, such as Martha Washington; heroines, such as Sybil Ludington; organization founders, such as Juliette Gordon Low of the Girl Scouts; women's rights workers, such as Susan B. Anthony; and famous personages devoted to the pursuit of artistic and creative endeavors, such as Pearl Buck. Females have also appeared on stamps honoring the family and motherhood.
paper will examine five women who were pioneers in their professions and were commemorated on U.S. postage stamps: Amelia Earhart (1898-1937), Elizabeth Blackwell (1821-1910), Frances Perkins (1880-1965), Mildred (Babe) Didrikson Zaharias (1914-1956), and Mary Walker (1832-1919).

United States postage stamps, press releases concerning their initial issue, and bio-bibliographic works on the subjects of the stamps under consideration constitute the primary source materials for this study. A comprehensive reference source such as The Postal Service Guide to U.S. Postage Stamps provides a brief history of U.S. postage stamps, descriptions of all U.S. postage stamps ever issued along with visual representations of some of them. Articles in philatelic journals such as Linn's Stamp News contribute background information on the process of choosing postage stamps. United States Postal Service press releases provide insight into the reasons underlying the choice of various postage stamp subjects. Biographical works on the actual personages selected for this study give more exhaustive details of their characteristics and accomplishments.

Since such a small percentage of U.S. postage stamps commemorate women or women-related subjects, knowledge of how all U.S. postage stamp subjects are chosen may be useful in analyzing specific stamp subject choices. The Postmaster General has the authority to create U.S. postage stamps. Since 1957 the Postmaster General has appointed the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee (CSAC) to choose the subjects of U.S. postage stamps.
The CSAC meets for one day every other month in Washington, DC to review the nearly 2000 suggestions for stamps which it receives from the public every year. The CSAC represents expertise in American art, business, history, technology, culture, and philately. The CSAC uses ten criteria in determining stamp selection. These criteria, which were updated in 1985, have remained basically the same since the postal reorganization in the early 1970's. They include the following:

1. Subject should be American or American related.
2. A living person shall not be portrayed.
3. Stamps honoring individuals will be issued on or in conjunction with a significant anniversary of birth, but not sooner than ten years after death.
4. Events of historical significance will be marked only on anniversaries in multiples of 50 years.
5. Events and themes must have widespread national appeal and significance.
6. Fraternal, political, sectarian, service or charitable organizations, a commercial enterprise or a specific product will not be honored.
7. Cities, towns, municipalities, counties, primary or secondary schools, colleges or universities, hospitals, libraries or similar institutions will not be honored.
8. Statehood anniversaries will be observed only at intervals of 50 years from date of state's first entry into the union; state related or regional anniversaries will be considered as subjects for postal stationery at intervals of 50 years.
9. Religious institutions or individuals whose principal achievements are associated with religious undertakings or beliefs will not be honored.
10. Semipostals will not be issued.

The final decision for stamp subject and design resides, as it always has, with the Postmaster General.

U.S. postage stamps are classified into several categories according to their intended use: definitive, commemorative,
special, airmail, booklet, and coil. Definitive stamps may range from one-cent to five-dollar denominations. The traditional subjects of definitive stamps have been former presidents, statesmen, prominent persons, and national shrines. Commemorative stamps are usually larger and more colorful than definitive stamps and honor important people or events of national significance. Special stamps are issues which supplement regular stamps, such as Christmas stamps. Airmail stamps are used for sending mail overseas. Booklet and coil refer to the means through which the stamps are distributed rather than what the stamps depict. Women have appeared in each of these categories, but for the most part they have been celebrated in the definitive and commemorative categories.

Amelia Earhart, Elizabeth Blackwell, Frances Perkins, Mildred Didrikson Zaharias, and Mary Walker were each maiden maidens in their respective professions of aviation, medicine, presidential cabinet membership, professional athletics, and medicine. Because the period of the late 1800's and early 1900's when these five women were pioneering in their professions was also a time when women were working for equality, such as female suffrage, each of them, in her own unique way, contributed to the struggle for women's rights. This study will explore the individual accomplishments of these five women which merited their postal commemoration as well as the similarities in the personal traits of these pioneers.
AMELIA EARHART

"Amelia Earhart's feats placed her among the legendaries of aviation" stated a United States Postal Service bulletin regarding the release of the eight-cent Amelia Earhart commemorative air mail postage stamp which was issued on July 24, 1963, the sixty-fifth anniversary of her birth. The stamp design was based on a full-length photograph of Earhart dressed in her flight gear standing before her Lockheed "Electra" airplane. The vertical stamp was printed in red and deep brown.

Earhart was born in Atchison, Kansas in 1898. She and her sister enjoyed a vigorous outdoor lifestyle including horseback riding and playing on a homemade roller coaster in their backyard. Amelia's father Edwin was loving and generous, but overindulgence in alcohol kept his family near poverty. While visiting Canada during World War I, Earhart decided to stay and take part in the war effort. She was especially interested in the adventures of the Royal Flying Corps. Back in the United States, Earhart took her first airplane ride with record-holder Frank Hawks in 1920. Earhart made her first solo flight in 1921 after receiving lessons from a pioneer woman pilot, Neta Snook. On her twenty-fifth birthday, Earhart spent her earnings on an airplane in which she set a short-lived women's altitude record of 14,000 feet. This was the heyday of small rural aviation expositions which featured plane races and stunt-riding, and
Earhart was a familiar figure at these events. Earhart was employed, first, as a teacher and then as a social worker in a Boston settlement house. Because of her unaffected charm and flying ability, Earhart was chosen to be a passenger and log-keeper aboard the plane "Friendship" on a journey to England. On June 17, 1928, Earhart became the first woman to cross the Atlantic in an airplane. Earhart captured the public's attention after completion of the trans-Atlantic trip. Young women were inspired by her achievement while the older generation was reassured by her modesty, simplicity of dress, and abstinence from tobacco and alcohol at a time when social values appeared to be changing rapidly and the lines between appropriate and inappropriate behavior were becoming blurred. Gaily-colored clothing, smoking, swearing, and frankness about sex among young women were becoming more commonplace in the 1920's representing a sharp break from the more restrained culture of the late nineteenth century.

Earhart's fame changed her life. She became known as "Lady Lindy" and the "First Lady of the Air." She published a book about the flight, 20 Hrs. 40 Min., and lectured extensively. Earhart became the aviation editor of Cosmopolitan magazine and the vice president of Ludington Airlines. Because of her belief that women were entitled to the same sense of accomplishment and economic independence as men, Earhart was active in Zonta International, a service club of professional women. She was a founding member of the Ninety-Nines, an international
organization of licensed women pilots, serving as president from 1929 to 1933.

In 1931 Earhart made the difficult decision to marry George Palmer Putnam, a promoter who had been instrumental in choosing her for the "Friendship" flight. The decision to marry was a difficult one for her. To Earhart, who dearly valued her freedom and her career, marriage signified a sacrifice. Only a year earlier while corresponding with a close friend, Earhart had stated "I think I may not ever be able to see marriage except as a cage until I am unfit to work or fly or be active..." The marriage of Earhart and Putnam appeared to work quite well. Of their marital situation, Earhart said "Ours is a reasonable and contented partnership; my husband with his solo jobs, and I with mine; but the system of dual control works satisfactorily and our work and our play is a great deal together." In fact, Putnam handled the details and publicity of his wife's flights and began several business ventures capitalizing on Earhart's name.

In 1932 Earhart became the first woman to fly the Atlantic alone reassuring herself that her fame was indeed deserved. For this adventure, President Hoover awarded Earhart the National Geographic Society's highest honor, a gold medal for notable geographic achievement. The President presented the award "...in the spirit with the great pioneering women to whom every generation of Americans has looked up with admiration for their firmness of will, their strength of character, and their cheerful spirit of comradeship in the work of the world..." Earhart
continued to take on aeronautical challenges, convinced that her flights opened up the frontiers in transportation and air safety. She made the first solo flight from the United States mainland to Hawaii and the first nonstop flight across the continental United States, both in 1935. That same year, Earhart became affiliated with Purdue University as a career counselor for women students and a special advisor in aeronautics. The university provided her with a modern Lockheed Electra airplane so well-fitted for aeronautical research that it was dubbed the "flying laboratory." Earhart planned an equatorial flight around the world in order to pursue several research goals: study human reactions and mechanical performance at high altitudes and extreme temperatures over long intervals; gather microscopic samples from the air; and examine airport facilities throughout the world. Another primary purpose of the trip was the promotion of general public interest in global air travel. She and her navigator, Frederick Noonan, began their journey heading east from Miami, Florida on June 1, 1937. During the last leg of the around-the-world journey, communication was lost on July 2 between Earhart and the world. The plane was lost somewhere between Lae, New Guinea and Howland Island in the mid-Pacific. No trace of Earhart, her crew, or the airplane has ever been found. After World War II, widespread speculation was that Earhart had been on a secret espionage mission and had been captured by the Japanese. No proof of this theory, however, exists.
Despite the young age at which she presumably died, Earhart made lasting contributions to her world. Earhart realized that it was "not often that we of the feminine persuasion" were "given such opportunities to pioneer in our chosen fields." She took full advantage of her opportunities to further female participation in aviation. In a note left to her husband before her attempted world flight, Earhart said "Women must try to do the things men have tried. When they fail, their failure must be but a challenge to others." Through her adventures, Earhart helped a pioneer industry gain fame and public acceptance. Her personality, enthusiasm, and courage inspired women in all walks of life and proved to the world that women were capable of being pioneers alongside with men.

ELIZABETH BLACKWELL

On January 23, 1974 an eighteen-cent stamp was issued to commemorate Elizabeth Blackwell, the first woman in modern times to graduate from college with a degree in medicine. The vertically-oriented stamp features Blackwell's face as it appeared in a photograph taken when she was in her seventies. Her oval portrait is framed by the words "Elizabeth Blackwell First Woman Physician". Blackwell was a woman pioneer in being accepted for entry into a United States medical school. She obtained her degree from Geneva Medical School in 1849 breaking
the barrier for other female medical school aspirants. She used her medical training for other moral reforms and advanced women's opportunities in the medical field through the founding of a hospital and training school for women in New York City.

Blackwell was born near Bristol, England in 1821. Her family moved to America in 1832 searching for greater personal and economic opportunity. Her father Samuel was a Whig, a Dissenter, and a reformer. Blackwell adored her father and was influenced by his convictions concerning electoral and school reform, abolition of slavery, temperance, and equal rights for men and women. Also from her father, Elizabeth gained a sense of spirituality and, consequently, saw religion as a positive force throughout her life. Blackwell learned a reverence for maternity from her mother who, with nine children, always seemed to be either nursing or expecting children. Although Blackwell never married nor had children of her own, she later was to adopt and raise a young Irish orphan, Katharine Barry. Blackwell's interest in children later manifested itself in her work in hygiene and preventive medicine. Blackwell was affected by exposure to Unitarianism and her study of philosophical thought and transcendentalism which led her to develop the traits of independent thought and self-development. She read works in three different languages and attended concerts, oratorios, conferences, and debates. Ishbel Ross, Blackwell's biographer said Blackwell had "...the need to widen the horizon of anything"
she undertook, a driving tendency to direct all efforts toward mankind as a whole."18

Blackwell received an excellent education through the private tutors her father had engaged for all of his children and also through her own efforts at self-improvement. She spent a few years teaching, but was soon bored with it and was also afraid of the prospect of marriage. Whenever Blackwell "became sufficiently intimate with an individual to realize what a life association might mean," she "shrank from the prospect, disappointed or repelled."19 Elizabeth was looking for something to fill her life when a dying friend suggested she study medicine. The woman said, "You have health, leisure, and a cultivated intelligence. Why don't you devote these qualities to the service of suffering women? Why don't you study medicine? Had I been treated by a lady doctor, my worst sufferings would have been spared me."20 At first Blackwell, who had always been repulsed by the physical structure of the body and its ailments, thought nothing of the suggestion, but gradually the idea began to grow. As she explored the possibility of studying medicine, Blackwell met with many obstacles, the main one being that no women were attending U.S. medical schools. Eventually, obtaining a medical degree took on the significance of a great moral struggle. Also, Blackwell reasoned that by becoming a physician she could put a barrier between herself and marriage, a prospect she seemed to fear. After making the decision to attend medical school, Blackwell spent two years teaching in North Carolina in
order to earn money for her tuition. She also studied medicine privately with a respected North Carolina physician, Dr. Samuel Dickson, and put her efforts into applying to medical schools. The day Blackwell arrived at the home of Reverend John Dickson, the brother of Dr. Samuel Dickson, to teach at his school and utilize his medical library, she was overwhelmed with fear and doubt. She had something of a religious vision through which a deep conviction came to her that her pursuit of the study of medicine was correct.

A peace as to the rightness of my course settled down upon my mind that was never afterwards destroyed. During the years that followed I suffered many and bitter sorrows, but I have never since been able to doubt that, imperfect and full of shortcomings as my life has been, it has nevertheless been providentially ordered in its main outlines, and has been used in the divine evolution of the race.21

In 1847, after much debate and deliberation by the faculty, Blackwell was accepted into Geneva Medical College in New York state. The faculty of the college were inclined to reject her application, but since they were afraid to refuse a prominent physician who had recommended her, they let the students vote on the issue of Blackwell's admission. The students, thinking the whole matter was something of a joke, voted unanimously to accept Blackwell. After receiving her medical degree in 1849, Blackwell traveled to Europe for further study. Her hopes of becoming a surgeon were ended when she contracted ophthalmia and eventually lost an eye.
By 1851 Blackwell was ready to begin her medical career in New York City. Because she was barred from practice in city dispensaries and hospitals, Blackwell purchased a house from which to practice. While she was working to get established in her profession, Blackwell spent her time on a series of lectures on hygiene, which was not yet accepted as a necessary component of good health. In 1852 the compiled lectures were published as *The Laws of Life with Special Reference to the Physical Education of Girls*, the first of many works concerning social issues which Blackwell was to author.\(^{22}\)

In 1857 Blackwell's house became the New York Infirmary for Women and Children and was run by Blackwell and her younger sister Emily, herself a recent medical school graduate. The early years were difficult as many people had trouble accepting female doctors. Sometimes if a patient died, people would mob the infirmary. Blackwell spent the year of 1858 lecturing in England in order to promote opportunities for women in medicine in that country. While in England, Blackwell was enrolled as a recognized physician in the Medical Register of the United Kingdom. Blackwell was the first woman to achieve this honor.

During the American Civil War, Elizabeth and Emily Blackwell were involved in the selection and training of nurses. After the Civil War the trustees of the New York Infirmary for Women and Children asked for a college charter which was granted in 1868. It was Blackwell's dream to provide the best possible medical education for women. The academic terms were lengthened,
clinical experience was gained through the hospital, courses were systematically graded, and entrance exams were required, ten years before state law required them. Blackwell was appointed Chair of Hygiene. In 1869 Blackwell left the medical school in the capable hands of Emily Blackwell and went back to England to promote the study and practice of good hygiene in that country. Because ill health prevented Blackwell from accepting the Chair of Gynecology at London Royal Free Hospital, she turned to print, stressing the importance of preventive medicine, sanitation, public health, and sex education. Blackwell died in 1910.

Blackwell had always admitted that she was not a natural doctor. She was more interested in the study of medicine and never cared for the actual practice except when it involved hygiene and prevention. Medicine, to her, had become "the instrument for the cure of social disorders." She applied her medical background to contemporary social problems, publishing informative articles on subjects ranging from sex education to prostitution. With her admission to and subsequent graduation from medical school, Blackwell opened up the doors of the traditionally male dominated medical schools to women. She furthered the opportunities for women in medicine with the establishment of the New York Infirmary for Women and Children and the medical school at that location. A United States Postal Service information sheet on the Blackwell stamp lists the establishment of the hospital as Blackwell's greatest national contribution. Blackwell became the first of many women to prove
that females were just as competent as men in the profession of medicine.

FRANCES PERKINS

Frances Perkins, first female cabinet member, was commemorated on a fifteen-cent postage stamp issued April 10, 1980, the hundredth anniversary of her birth. The vignette, which was printed in blue, shows Perkins' left profile. She is wearing her customary hat and beads. "Frances Perkins" is printed across the bottom of the vertically-oriented stamp.  

Frances Perkins became a national figure when Franklin Roosevelt chose her to serve as Secretary of Labor in 1933. She held that post until after Roosevelt's death in 1945. Perkins' fight for employment insurance and higher wages to raise purchasing power contributed largely to the social reform legislation of the New Deal.

She was born Fannie Coralie Perkins in Boston, Massachusetts and later changed her first name to Frances. Her family was middle class, Republican, and Congregationalist. Perkins was an articulate but solitary youth. However, at Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Massachusetts, Frances led a full social life and served as senior class president. Mount Holyoke, a highly-respected liberal arts college was founded by Mary Lyon, a pioneer in the education of women of moderate means. For her
pioneering work in the field of women's education Lyon herself was to be later commemorated on a U.S. postage stamp in the 1986-7 Great Americans Issue.25 Perkins' Mount Holyoke education provided lasting influence in her life by instilling within her a strong sense of mission. During her senior year, Perkins decided to devote herself to urban and industrial problems. She had been moved by a speech from Florence Kelley of the National Consumers' League as well as an economic history course which surveyed the working conditions in factories. It was through this history course that Perkins became acquainted with the tribulations of working class existence and realized also that the avoidance of poverty was not a simple question of liquor or laziness but also of safety devices on machines and the regularity of employment.

After college graduation, Perkins taught school in Chicago for several years. During this time, Perkins came into contact with settlement houses in that city. While helping at the settlement houses, Perkins saw the benefits and detriments of labor unions on the working poor. From 1907 to 1909 Perkins was the general secretary of the Philadelphia Research and Protective Association. In 1912 Perkins joined the Socialist Party because she was questioning capitalism's effect on society. She took graduate courses in economics and sociology, eventually earning a master's degree in political science from Columbia University in New York City. Owing largely to academic advancement and her exposure to diverse political and economic theories, Perkins came to the conclusion that practical solutions, not the more
visionary approaches of the socialists, were the best avenues for improving the situation of the labor force.26 This conclusion was partially responsible for Perkins' registration as a member of the Democrat party after the New York state elections of 1918.

From 1910 to 1912 Perkins was the secretary of the New York City Consumer's League and became an expert on bakeries and fire prevention. She was an effective lobbyist for labor legislation, taught a sociology course at Adelphi College, and was a soapbox orator for women's suffrage. When she was thirty-three years old, Perkins married Paul Wilson, but kept her own name because she thought it would be best professionally. Perkins believed it may have hurt her professional credibility if she were referred to as another man's wife, meaning that her husband, not her professional position, was her first priority. Perkins had to go as far as retaining an attorney to solve problems with a life insurance company about keeping her maiden name. Wilson and Perkins had one child, Susanna. Later in life Wilson developed mental instability and spent most of his time in institutions for the mentally disabled. Perkins would not discuss his condition publicly, but she never abandoned Wilson. In 1918 Perkins became the first woman to be appointed to the New York State Industrial Commission. Governor Smith thought he should show some attention to women since they had received the vote in New York in 1917. He appointed Perkins because he wanted someone who was capable of executing her post and not just a token woman.27 In 1926 Smith appointed Perkins to the chairmanship of the
Industrial Board and two years later he appointed her industrial commissioner of the state of New York, an office to which Governor Franklin Roosevelt re-appointed her for the years 1929-33.

When President Roosevelt chose her as Secretary of Labor, Perkins felt she had to accept the position despite her distaste for publicity, dislike of separation from her family, and fear of failure. Perkins felt her failure would be viewed as a failure for all women. When rumors of Perkins' impending appointment became public, many people wrote Roosevelt supporting his choice. Roosevelt stood on Perkins' excellent record as State Industrial Commissioner of New York. Organized labor, however, denounced her selection as she was not a member of any trade organization. Roosevelt felt Perkins could best represent all workers, organized and unorganized.28

As Secretary of Labor, Perkins successfully rebuilt an unorganized and corrupt Department of Labor into an instrument which promoted the welfare of wage-earners. Perkins had to overcome widespread skepticism and prejudice because she was a woman and was not from the ranks of organized labor. She had to fight a whispering campaign about her credibility. A resolution to impeach her was introduced to Congress in 1938. The charge was conspiracy to avoid enforcing the deportation laws against Harry Bridges, an accused communist. Perkins had halted deportation proceedings while awaiting the decision in another court case, Kessler v. Strecker, which could affect the outcome
of the Bridges affair. Perkins' impeachment hearings were the culmination of a campaign by Congressman Martin Dies of Texas who was trying to make a name for himself as chairman of the special Committee on Un-American Activities. His propaganda turned public opinion against Perkins, leading many people to believe she was a communist herself. Perkins had to turn inward to find the faith to sustain her through this period; she had become a devout Episcopalian as an adult. The House Judiciary Committee finally announced that there were not sufficient facts to warrant the impeachment of Perkins. Perkins, however, continued to receive bad press because some committee members announced their disapproval of her actions in the Bridges' case. Perkins served briefly under President Truman before joining the Civil Service Commission where she served until 1953. During this time Perkins delivered public lectures and wrote a biography of Roosevelt, *The Roosevelt I Knew*. From 1957 until her death in 1965, Perkins held a professorship in Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations.

Perkins had led a life devoted to social justice. She left her imprint on wages and hours legislation, social security, and the Department of Labor. She succeeded in a professional world of men, while remaining committed to the interests of all, both men and women. Many feminists were upset with Perkins when she would not support an Equal Rights Amendment as State Industrial Commissioner of New York, but instead advocated protective legislation for women. Perkins would not be swayed in her
goals for workers and was "steadfast in creating a more just industrial society."  She sacrificed a great deal of her private life to serve as a public figure. The fact that she was a woman only enhanced Perkins' accomplishments; she did not let her gender deter her. Because, as a woman, Perkins accomplished so much as a public figure, she became an inspiration to all females who aspired to advancement in public life.

MILDRED ELLA DIDRIKSON ZAHARIAS

On September 22, 1981 the eighteen-cent Babe Zaharias commemorative stamp was released as a part of the Sports Series. The standard-sized vertically-oriented stamp featured a front view of Zaharias from the waist up, holding a trophy. The purple printed stamp contained the words "Babe Zaharias" at the top. Postmaster General William F. Bolger said of Zaharias: "She was a magnificent athlete, a wonderful woman, and a gallant human being. She was a great American. In striving to excel, she not only won personal fame and countless awards, but she brought honor to her nation as well."

Zaharias was born Mildred Ella Didrikson in Port Arthur, Texas in 1914 to Norwegian immigrants. Her father was a carpenter and her mother, who had won skating championships in Norway, worked as a practical nurse and sometimes took in washing. Didrikson grew up playing sandlot baseball with the
neighborhood boys gaining the nickname "Babe" because she reminded her playmates of Babe Ruth. Because she had been a high school basketball star, Didrikson was hired as a typist by an insurance company in order to play on the company's semi-professional basketball team. Didrikson became a national star, leading the team to two finals and a national championship. This rapid transition from near anonymity to national fame may have accounted for Didrikson's arrogance and boastfulness which alienated many of her teammates. Didrikson expanded to other sports by 1932. That year she won eight of ten events in the Amateur Athletic Union's National Women's track and field championships. Didrikson won two gold medals and set two world records in track and field events at the 1932 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles. Her Olympic honors brought fame and attention from both the public and the press. Unfortunately, however, there was no competitive context at this time through which a female athlete could earn a living. After the Olympics Didrikson turned professional spending a week in a vaudeville act, a season with a mixed basketball team, and two hundred games with a traveling baseball team. Didrikson resented the fact that she and other female athletes were stereotyped as secondary to male athletes and often thought of as a joke. Consequently, she fought this stereotype all her life.

In 1932 Didrikson took up golf as well as track. She won her first tournament in 1935 and thus gained professional status. The problem was that there were only two professional tournaments
available to women golfers. Didrikson turned to barnstorming, traveling to different golfing events, with a top male golfer. In 1938 she was paired with George Zaharias, a professional wrestler and promoter, in a men's tournament. She became Mildred Didrikson Zaharias before the end of the year. George Zaharias managed his wife's career and helped her regain her amateur status in golf by refusing to accept cash prizes. From 1949 to 1950 Babe Zaharias won every available women's golf title at least once. After returning to professional status in 1947, Zaharias helped found the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) and was the leading money winner in the circuit of nine tournaments from 1949 to 1951. In 1950 Zaharias was named the Woman Athlete of the Half-Century by the Associated Press. Zaharias died of cancer in 1956.

Through the founding of the LPGA and the fame which she brought to its tournaments, Zaharias was instrumental in turning women's golf into what it is today, a sport which is held at par with men's golf. She was competitive and aggressive putting her natural talents to work through effort and determination. Although Zaharias was not a campaigner for women's equality, her skills and accomplishments as a pioneer female professional athlete proved what women could achieve in the traditionally male-dominated world of professional sports.
Dr. Mary Walker has been praised as a humanitarian devoted to the care and treatment of the sick and wounded during the Civil War often at risk of her own life, a patriot dedicated and loyal to her country, and a woman who successfully fought against the sex discrimination of her time. Her personal achievements as much as her vocal support made a significant contribution to the struggle for women's rights.\textsuperscript{34}

The preceding description is from the \textit{United States Postal Service News} announcement of the twenty-cent Dr. Mary Walker stamp which was issued on June 10, 1982 commemorating her work as a Civil War surgeon. An oval portrait of Walker appeared on this vertically-oriented, standard-sized stamp which was printed in yellow, magenta, cyan, black tone, black line, and blue line. "Dr. Mary Walker" was printed in black at the top of the stamp. "Army Surgeon" appeared in blue immediately above the portrait and "Medal of Honor" below, also in blue.\textsuperscript{35} Walker was a pioneer in that she was the first woman to be given a contract as a surgeon in the United States Army. Walker's appointment as Acting Assistant Surgeon of the U.S. Army in 1864 was not the first nor the last way in which she attempted to break down barriers against women. Besides being a medical doctor, Walker fought for many social issues including dress reform and women's
suffrage by lecturing about and publishing works concerning contemporary social causes.36

Mary Edwards Walker was born in Oswego Town, New York in 1832 to a family with rather unorthodox views for its time. Her father believed that girls should be educated and encouraged to pursue professional careers. As a self-taught student of medicine, Alvah Walker felt that girls' health should not be impaired by the tight-fitting clothing which was currently in fashion. Consequently, Walker and her sisters wore unconventional loose-fitting dresses in their youth. Walker was influenced by the intellectual climate of upstate New York which consisted of Spiritualism, abolitionism, and temperance. The first Women's Rights Convention was held in 1848 in Seneca Falls, New York. That same year, a communistic, free-love colony was established in Oneida, New York. The Bloomerite movement flourished in the 1850's, and Walker was quick to adopt bloomers which consisted of a short skirt over loose-fitting trousers which were gathered at the ankles, as her form of dress.

Walker became one of the first American women to receive a medical degree from a U.S. college. She was the only woman in her class at Syracuse Medical College. After her 1885 graduation, Walker practiced medicine for a few months in Columbus, Ohio before returning to Rome, New York to marry and set up practice with former-classmate Albert Miller. Walker's marriage was unorthodox from the start. She kept the word "obey" out of the ceremony, wore trousers and a dress-coat to the
wedding, and retained her maiden name. Several years later Walker ordered her husband to leave because of his infidelity. Eventually they were divorced in 1869. After separating from her husband, Walker had a hard time attracting patients as women generally were not accepted by the public as doctors. Also, Walker continued to dress in bloomers which labelled her as a militant feminist. In 1857 Walker launched her career as a lecturer while speaking for dress reform. She argued that women should be more acquainted with their "physical organization" in order to preserve their health.

When the Civil War broke out, Walker went to Washington to seek appointment as an army surgeon. Although rejected for the position, Walker worked as a hospital volunteer and helped organize the Women's Relief Organization. Through this informal status, Walker worked at tent hospitals near battles and was appointed to fill in after the death of an assistant surgeon at Chattanooga in 1863. Walker does not seem to have performed much surgery, or even served regularly as a physician. She was in many ways similar to a hospital administrator or nurse. Walker often crossed over Confederate lines to give medical attention to civilians and was captured during one such expedition. She was imprisoned for several months before being freed in a prisoner exchange. Shortly thereafter, Walker received official appointment as Acting Assistant Surgeon, the first woman to receive such a commission from the U.S. Army. In 1866 Walker received the Congressional Medal of Honor for Meritorious Service.
from President Johnson because she had "...devoted herself with much patriotic zeal to the sick and wounded soldiers, both in the field and hospitals, to the detriment of her own health," and had "...endured hardships as a prisoner of war..."³⁸

Walker's biographer, Charles McCool Snyder, describes her post-war years as a "restless striving for lost causes."³⁹ Walker did not practice medicine for the rest of her life. Immediately following the war, Walker lobbied for pensions and benefits for female nurses, many of whom were destitute after the war. She continued her crusade for dress reform, expanding it to women's rights to hold office and vote. She appeared on lecture platforms with such luminaries of the women's movement as Lucy Stone, Susan B. Anthony, Mary Livermore, and Belva Lockwood. Walker eventually split with the suffragettes because of her growing eccentricity. She believed that an amendment for women's suffrage was unnecessary because women's suffrage was implicit in the Constitution. Walker also began to appear more radical with shorter hair and masculine trousers. Walker traveled to England where she had great success as a lecturer. She spoke to large, paying crowds about dress reform and her experiences in the war. Many reform-minded people in England were quick to accept Walker and her views. Back in the United States, Walker turned to the power of the pen. Her autobiographical Hit published in 1870 covered subjects such as love and marriage, dress reform, tobacco, temperance, women's franchise, divorce, labor, and religion. As she aged, Walker became more eccentric and even
less accepted by her peers. People laughed at her trouser-style clothing. Walker became an object of ridicule when she offered her home to the Kaiser of Germany for a peace conference at the outbreak of the hostilities which led to World War I. More humiliation came in 1917 when the Board of Medal Awards, in a general review, ruled that the medal of honor awarded to Walker and many others was unwarranted and officially withdrew them. Walker fought the decision unsuccessfully but never gave up her medal which she wore every day of her life. Walker died alone and poverty-stricken on her Oswego farm in 1919.

Perhaps Walker was simply ahead of her time, which made her appear eccentric. Many of the things for which she crusaded, such as dress reform and equal rights, are taken for granted today. In fact, Walker's accomplishments appear to be more appreciated these days. In 1977 the Secretary of the Army, acting on the recommendation of the Army Board of Correction of Military Records, reinstated Walker's Medal of Honor. The Board ruled that if not for her sex Walker would have been commissioned when she originally volunteered for army service in 1861. Therefore, she would have met all the Medal of Honor criteria established by the 1917 review. In any case, Walker was a pioneer female doctor and a crusader for female equality in all aspects of life. She aided in breaking down many barriers against women.
All five of these women -- Earhart, Blackwell, Perkins, Zaharias, and Walker -- shared the idea that women were inherently equal to men. Anything a man could do, a woman could do just as well. A woman was just as capable of flying a plane, playing a professional sport, holding a public office, or doctoring the sick as men. Whether or not these women campaigned actively for women's equality, their daily lives were testament to the extent of female capabilities. Upon examination of these pioneering females' lives, other similar beliefs and experiences which were indicative of their progressive, ground-breaking natures come to light.

Firstly, each of these women was an independent thinker. Blackwell read transcendentalist works. Walker joined the Bloomerite movement. Perkins explored political party platforms before seeking permanent affiliation with a specific party. Zaharias would not be suppressed by popular stereotypes of female athletic capabilities. Earhart abstained from alcohol and tobacco at a time when these products were quite popular among the upcoming women of her generation.

Secondly, several of these women carried strong influences from their youth throughout their lives. Both Blackwell and Walker had fathers whose progressive notions on female education and professions were significant in the formation of the women's characters. Blackwell and Perkins each lived with a sense of
spirituality which was gained early in life and saw them through the trying times of public rejection.

Thirdly, four of the five women married, each to a professional peer. Walker married a doctor with whom she had gone to medical school. Perkins married an economist who worked in politics and government. Earhart wed the man who promoted her for her first trans-Atlantic flight. Zaharias married a promoter who was a former professional athlete. Each of these women entered marriage when they were somewhat established in their professional careers, and all but Zaharias kept their maiden names. Blackwell alone chose to remain single.

Furthermore, three of these women worked at one time or another as teachers or social workers, or both. This is not surprising when one considers the fact that teaching and social work were basically the only socially acceptable female jobs in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Blackwell, Earhart, and Perkins worked as teachers. Earhart and Perkins also did social work in settlement houses.

Lastly, Blackwell, Walker, Earhart, and Perkins also furthered their status as public figures by lecturing and publishing books about their experiences. Walker and Earhart lectured about specific events in their careers such as the former's capture as a prisoner of war or the latter's flight across the Atlantic Ocean. Walker and Perkins both spoke out in favor of women's suffrage. Blackwell and Perkins spread their
views of issues to which they devoted their lives, such as preventive medicine and factory fire safety.

These five women were outstanding in ways beyond their pioneering careers. Together, these maiden maidens composed the qualities of commitment and courage to which American women aspire. They each had a part in opening up professional fields to future generations of American women despite the barriers which society had constructed against women in aviation, medicine, governmental service, and professional athletics. Earhart, Blackwell, Perkins, Zaharias, and Walker are certainly of enough national significance to warrant their commemoration on U.S. postage stamps.

2Ibid., pp. 60-61. U.S. postage stamps are numbered under the Scott's catalogue system. The $4 Isabella and Columbus stamp is Scott's #244.

3Ibid. The figure of 2400 U.S. postage stamps is derived from the fact that commemorative and definitive stamps issued from the inception of their use in 1847 to the present day, 1988, are numbered by Scott's system from 1 to 2400. Airmail stamps issued from 1918 to 1980 are numbered C1 to C116. Airmail special delivery stamps (1934 - 1936) are Scott's #CE1 and #CE2. Special delivery stamps (1885 - 1971) include E1 to E23.

4Ibid. Scott's numbers for the following stamps are: 306, 556, 585, 601, 636, 662, 673, 805, 840, 849 for Martha Washington; 1559 for Sybil Ludington; 116 for Juliette Gordon Low; 784, 1051 for Susan B. Anthony; 1848 for Pearl Buck; and 737 for Motherhood.


8Ibid.


12Ibid., p. 82.

14Putnam, *Soaring Wings*, p. 274. Actually the term is in the caption for a photograph inserted next to p. 274.
15Ibid., p. 273.
16Ibid., p. 46.
17United States Postal Service, "United States Postage Stamps", p. 209B. This source appears to be part of a public information release issued by the United States Postal Service concerning the Prominent American Series (1965 - 1975), of which the Elizabeth Blackwell stamp is a component. My source is a photocopy received from the United States Postal Service Library/Archives in response to my request for press release information on the Blackwell stamp.
20Ibid., p. 83.
22Ibid., p. 295. Blackwell also authored: *Address on the Moral Education of Women* (New York: Baptist and Taylor 1864); *Counsel to Parents on the Moral Education of their Children in Relation to Sex (Under Medical and Social Aspects)* (London: Hatchards, 1879); *Essays in Medical Sociology* (London: Ernest Bell, 1902); *Medicine as a Profession for Women* (New York: W.H. Tinson, 1860); *On the Decay of Municipal Representative Government, a Chapter of Personal Experience* (London: Moral Reform Union, 1885); *Pioneer Work in Opening the Medical Profession to Women* (London: Longmans, Green, and Company, 1895); *Rescue Work in Relation to Prostitution and Disease* (New York: Fowler and Wells, 1882); *The Influence of Women in the Profession of Medicine* (London: George Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1889); *Wrong and Right Methods of Dealing with Social Evil* (London: D. Williams, 1883).


28 Ibid., p. 239.


30 Sicherma, et. al., Notable American Women, p. 537.

31 Ibid., p. 539.


34 Ibid., p. 1.


36 Charles McCool Snyder, Dr. Mary Walker: The Little Lady in Pants (New York: Arno Press, 1974), p.81. Snyder gives May 1870 as the publishing date of Mary Edwards Walker's Hit, but does not provide any additional publishing information.

37 Ibid., p. 18.

38 Ibid., p. 52.

39 Ibid., p. 55.
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