

History of Women Tour

Theme: Even though women have not been official students for very long, they have had a significant impact throughout UVA history in a variety of ways! They persevered through hardships and were trailblazers!

[*Pink is kid tour specific*]

Introduction:

Raise your hand if you play sports! Raise your hand if you plan on going to college! Raise your hand if your Mom has a job! Raise your hand if you want to be a stay at home mom! Etc.

Compare/Contrast their responses & connect it to how women's roles have changed over time!

Mr. Jefferson intended for his University to educate “Southern Gentlemen” – during this time, there were no minority races or females at this institution. The lack of educational opportunities for women was tied to ideas about women in the South during this time. Since education is power, men worried that schooling women would give them a bold and boisterous attitude. Back then, women were held to the standards of being meek, quiet, domestic, and passive.

TJ's own life

Raised by an enslaved female nanny!

He once said: “A plan of female education has never been a subject of systematic contemplation with me. It has occupied my attention so far only as the education of my own daughters occasionally required.” ~ TJ, 1818

[Location: Pavilion 9 \(link to France\)](#)

- Martha, his beloved wife
 - Tristram Shandy letter! Lock of her hair in the breast pocket for 45 years!
Time wastes too fast: every letter I trace tells me with what rapidity of life follows my pen, the days and hours of are flying over our heads like clouds of a windy day never to return - more every thing presses on -- and every time I kiss thy hand to bid adieu, every absence which follows it, are preludes to the eternal separation which we are shortly to make!
- His daughters
 - In France, he made a point of bringing along his daughters as a “genuinely devoted single parent”
 - Placed both daughters in a convent, wrote them stern letters about proper female etiquette, and enforced a vast patriarchal distance
- Sally Hemings
 - DNA evidence: “Based on a statistical analysis by Monticello, the correlation between Jefferson’s presence and Hemings’ conceptions suggests a 99% probability that he fathered her children.”
 - Jefferson gave freedom to no other nuclear slave family

- Ultimate liberation of Sally Hemings' children was partially due to their light skin which allowed them to pass as white enough to be freed people
- Maria Cosway
 - Anglo-Italian beauty who left him utterly infatuated
 - They spent several months in a romantic haze, touring Parisian gardens, museums, and art shows together! *Ooh la la!*
- In general, during TJ's time...
 - Jefferson's glorious plans for his Academical Village were not for women.
 - All students were elite, wealthy, white, and usually southern males. The only women at UVa were in professors' families.
 - The second door of many pavilions allowed for the professors' family to enter and leave the residence upstairs without disturbing the classes and gatherings taking place downstairs.
 - Women's education around the founding of UVa in 1819 was mostly general public education for the lower classes. The upper class could attend seminaries that taught manners, behavior, and basic academia (think proper "ladylike" activities!)
 - He designed a curriculum for his daughters and female relatives at Monticello. It focused on music, French, and general reading - these were considered appropriate for cultured women, while the maths and sciences (including political and legal science) were left to the men.

Activity: Practice being "ladylike": teach them all the basic curtsy and drinking imaginary cups of tea properly - you could even teach them to say "Parlez-vous francais?"

Discussion questions:

- Have you ever been to France? Or on a plane to another country?*
- What was your babysitter or nanny like?*
- Did they have an influence on where you are today?*
- Do any of you play an instrument?*

The Victorian Era brought in new desire to educate both sons *and* daughters, and this idea moved from England to the U.S. by the end of the century. By 1900, approximately 1/3 of colleges across the country provided co educational opportunities.

Enslaved women

Isabella Gibbons

~became literate despite the constraints of slavery [legal restrictions/strong opposition of white society]

~domestic servant in the household of Pavilions V and VI

~great wife, successful union with William Gibbons [learned to read by carefully observing and listening to the white students around him]; raised their children while living in slavery at the University -- daughter Bella was taught in secret by her mother!
~Isabella = first person of color to teach at the Jefferson School (freedman's school in Charlottesville); taught there for more than twenty years.

~William Gibbons became a prominent religious leader as minister at the First Baptist Church in Charlottesville and at Zion Baptist Church in Washington, D.C.

***Example of an enslaved woman with the role of educator, mother, and revolutionary!**

Activity: Visit pavilion 6! "Teach each other something cool" in her honor!

Discussion questions:

When did you learn to read?

What is your favorite book to read to your parents/siblings/self?

Catherine "Kitty" Foster

~free black woman who lived near the university from 1833 to 1863 on Venable Lane [nearby, African American burial grounds were preserved as a one-acre park next to the South Lawn project]

~seamstress who worked doing laundry for faculty and students in the early to mid-nineteenth century, and who bought the property in 1833

~her descendants lived there until 1906

~area known as "Canada" was early community for free African Americans

~site of Foster's home is now marked by a "shadow catcher" which marks the building's outline in shadow lines

~model of the integration of past and present communities

***Example of early leader who founded a strong community against strong political and social forces of the time. Both her gender and her race could have held her back but she prevailed in establishing this strong C-ville community.**

Activity: Make shadows in the sun!

Discussion questions:

Has anyone ever been to the real Canada? What is it like? [Make comparisons between distance and ideology]

Who is your favorite famous woman? What makes her a good leader?

Women from 1850-1910

~1892, BOV decides that women can take exams to earn degrees, though they still cannot study here and must take their classes elsewhere (after some debate they agree to admit female students under certain conditions: women were not considered mature enough to enroll until they turned 20 years old, and some had to have attended another college for a few years to ensure they could handle the rigor of UVA.)

In June 1892, **Caroline Preston Davis** sent a petition to **William M. Thornton**, Chairman of the Faculty, requesting special permission to take the **examinations in the School of Mathematics** for the University's 1892-1893 session.

In response to Davis's petition, the faculty members considered the broader question of the admission of women to the University. After some debate, they agreed to admit female students under certain conditions. They recommended a series of measures offering women limited educational opportunities at the school. On June 29, 1892, the Board of Visitors passed a resolution allowing women who demonstrated "**good character and adequate preparation**" to take examinations for an annual fee of twenty-five dollars. The students would not be permitted to attend regular lectures, but could study privately with University professors if they desired. For their efforts, women would **earn a "pass certificate," but not a diploma.**

Davis met the conditions and became U.Va.'s first female student. She took the examinations separately from the male students taking the same test, and passed with distinction.

~1894, the BOV voted against the admission of women under any circumstances.

~1901, U.Va. begins to offer a co-ed summer school, and women are admitted to a two-year nursing diploma program at the U.Va. hospital.

● **Georgia O'Keefe!**

- Family moved to Charlottesville in 1909
- Studied art in NYC; Studied at UVA summer of 1912
- Taught at the University in the summers of 1913-1916 [Drawing 2, 3, 4]
- "Soft curves of the Rotunda's dome caught her imagination"
- Initial breakthrough 1916 (year she left Charlottesville)
- Art style: beautiful bright flowers and curving lines and unique natural images
- Fell in love with Arthur Macmahon, a professor of government at the summer school; didn't work out
- Mother's death brings her back to C'Ville one more time before she died in New Mexico in 1986 at age 98

~Issues with any women at all:

~they cannot fulfill their domestic role

~male students would lose focus with women in attendance

~no real gentleman would turn in a woman for the Honor Code

~conflict between our traditions and the potential for progress!

~women contradicted the values of TJ

- ★ **Constance Page Daniel**, a faculty daughter and one of the first female students in a winter session, describes her experience: "If you were a woman and could breathe, you usually had four or five men following 'round behind you...When I'd walk into a classroom, the students would all stomp. It was their signal of derision."

~1910 - try to establish a coordinate women's college in Charlottesville but defeated at Virginia legislature five times

~Mary Washington became UVA's "sister school" and was far enough away to not be a distraction to the men of the University

NOTE: Throughout UVA history, Professor's wives and daughters enriched the community with social and service activities. Female staff served as respected advisors and beloved surrogate mothers to generations of UVa students.

Early "students"

*After Alderman became the main library in 1938, the Rotunda became a place for artifacts, guided tours, and the occasional ball or reception. It stood more as a monument to the past than as the central building of the university. *Whispering gallery story @ the whispering wall!**

~In November 1919, President Alderman asks faculty to admit women to graduate and professional school [at least 20 years of age + 2 years of experience at another school]

~It took over 100 years to allow women to study at the University! Pretend you can see 100 years into the future. What do you think UVA will be like by then?

~ "Firsts in the 1920's"

- first Dean of Women
- first woman appointed to the Board of Visitors
- first woman to earn a UVa law degree
- first Curry graduates (1/2 of all women)
- first female students in graduate schools [*constituting less than 1% of the student body*]
- right to vote!

~Are any of you the first - the oldest child in your family? What is it like to be the oldest? Is it hard/fun/scary/exciting?

~Dean of Women: *"Women had no gathering place and were distributed... making them a sad, lonely lot."* Fraternities, clubs, and societies, whose membership excluded women, dominated life on Grounds. It took years before women's dorms existed!

~SO women created their own separate student government, found their own places on Grounds, and developed their own separate social lives [Sororities in the 1920's]

~There were tea rooms designated for female students to relieve themselves of the torment of the boys in between classes.

~Several faculty wives and daughters gained acceptance in the College, especially when enrollment dropped sharply during the Great Depression and WWII

~ "Firsts in the 1930's":

- first woman to earn M.D. from UVA.
- *Alice Jackson* (African-American female) applies to the school for a Master's in French and UVa pays for her to attend Columbia University instead!

~1944, Mary Washington College becomes women's liberal arts college to UVa

~1952, Mary Munford Hall (currently the IRC) is first residence hall built specifically for the University's female students and could accommodate up to 104 women.

~1965, there is concern because UVa's all-male counterparts (Ivy Leagues) were moving towards coeducation.

~Late 1960's, Pres Shannon is in favor of coeducation -- majority of students supported it, thinking coeducation would strengthen the academic and social life of the University

~Lawsuits against the University -- it is the only public university in the nation that directed female applicants to a "sister" school more than 65 miles away!

~The lawsuit that finally won the case for women was argued by a UVA Law School graduate! And (I think) one of the women in the suit was named Virginia. How fitting!

Post Co-education

~September 1970 (after 150 years of exclusion!) the first class of undergraduate women enters the College of Arts and Sciences at UVa -- almost 40%!

★ **Holly Smith** was a 1972 graduate of the College of Arts and Sciences and one of the first female undergraduate students. "I arrived in Charlottesville in September 1970 ready to do battle in the cause of making sure women were given equal treatment."

★ **Sandra Lewis** was an African-American CLAS 1972 graduate. She lived in married student housing and socialized with other married couples. "During the Vietnam War, we had very traditional, necktie-wearing students and then we had the 60s radicals. [A bigger issue...] there was a lot of integration of the [African American] group into the campus life."

~SPORTS:

★ **Mary Slaughter** played for the University's tennis team. She became the first woman at UVa to participate in an athletic program and earn a varsity letter in any sport. (Slaughter Gym is named after her.)

★ Women's intercollegiate athletic program slowly grows to include varsity programs over time -- the passing of Title IX in 1975 mandated that UVa provide equal opportunities and funding to men's and women's athletic programs

****Play a game! Frisbee, catch, sprinting races!**

~In 1972, **Cynthia Goodrich** moved into 28 East Lawn, becoming the first female Lawn resident, and more women received invitations the following year.

****Break into teams -- find Lawn room 28, lawn room 1 (Sandra's room!)**

~**Katie Couric** was head resident of the Lawn in 1979.

~By the time the first full class graduated in 1974, gained entry into

- organizations (Honor committee members, Lawn residents)
- secret societies (IMPs, Ravens)
- leadership positions (editors of *The Cavalier Daily*)

~Women were here to stay!

The BossyPants Stop

Tina Fey talks about her time in Charlottesville!

~"Let me start off by saying that at the University of Virginia in 1990, I was Mexican. I looked Mexican, that is, next to my fifteen thousand blond and blue-eyed classmates, most of whom owned horses, or at least resembled them. I tried to find the white-boy-looking-to-rebel, but I wasn't ethnic enough to be an exciting departure."

~A painstaking climb to the top of Old Rag mountain in the middle of the night!

~"Thomas Jefferson—another gorgeous white boy who would not have been interested in me. This was my problem in a nutshell. To get some play in Charlottesville, you had to be either a Martha Jefferson or a Sally Hemings."

Women today

The Studies in Women, Gender and Sexuality major started in 1980.

The Women's Center was founded in 1985.

Teresa Sullivan became the University's first female president in 2010;

Helen Dragas became the University's first female Rector of the BOV in 2011.

Today, women comprise 55 percent of the undergraduate student body!

****Since 1980, women comprised a majority of the incoming first-year class, and have every year since!****

Concluding questions~

Who was your favorite woman we talked about today?

What were some qualities that made her important (brave, dedicated, talented, etc.)?

Stand in a circle and yell out things we learned today!