

THE KNIGHTS

Information for YOU!

Daughters of Liberty

"Revolutionary women . . . shared with cheerfulness and gaiety privations and sufferings to which the situation of their country exposed them. In every stage of this severe trial, they displayed virtue and with a ready acquiescence, with a firmness always cheerful, and a constancy that never lamented all the sacrifices . . . they yielded up the conveniences furnished by wealth and commerce, consenting to share the produce of their labour. They even gave up without regret a considerable portion of the covering designed for their own families, to supply the wants of a distressed soldiery; and heroically suppressed the involuntary sigh which the departure of their brothers, sons and husbands for camp, rendered from their bosoms."--- **Chief Justice John Marshall (1804)**

In spite of the fact that women did not vote in the eighteenth century, they found ways of making themselves felt in public affairs. At the time of the Stamp Act crisis, some young women who called themselves "Daughters of Liberty" announced that they would accept the attentions of only those young men who were willing to fight against the act "to the last extremity."

During the non-importation campaign (when colonists refused to buy British goods imported from England), women in organized groups worked with great zeal to provide for the colonies cloth and other articles which had formerly come from England. Said one paper of the spinning they did, "That disagreeable noise made by the rattling of the footwheel was counted fine music."

Women also invented all kinds of concoctions made from local plants to take the place of tea. In at least one seaport they had their own tea party. On October 24, 1774, fifty-one women in Edenton, North Carolina, signed a resolution in support of the provincial deputies of North Carolina who had pledged not to drink tea or to wear British cloth. A huge teapot on the Edonton Green and a bronze tablet on the Chowan County Court House commemorate this act.

Women in Newport, Rhode Island, announced their intention to do without luxuries imported from England and asked men to forego "their dearer and more beloved 'Punch,' and renounce going so often to Taverns."

In another pursuit normally open only to men--political propaganda--one woman, Mercy Warren of Plymouth, performed with vigor. She was the sister of James Otis, and she equaled him in brilliance if not opportunity to exercise her talents. She wrote many letters which were published in Boston newspapers. She also wrote anti-Tory plays at a time when play writing was frowned on even for men in New England. Later she wrote one of the first histories of the American Revolution.

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