

## March, Women's History Month

The roots of National Women's History Month go back to March 8, 1857, when women from various New York City factories staged a protest over working conditions. The first Women's Day Celebration in the United States was also in New York City in 1909. In February, 1980, President Jimmy Carter issued the first Presidential Proclamation declaring the week of March 8th, 1980 as National Women's History Week. Congress established National Women's History Week in 1981 to be commemorated annually the second week of March. In 1987, Congress expanded the week to a month. Every year since, Congress has passed a resolution for Women's History Month, and the president has issued a proclamation.

Here are a few inspirational quotes...

"How important it is for us to celebrate our heroes and she-roes!" Maya Angelou

"Struggle is an unending process. Freedom is never really won. You earn it and win it in every generation." Coretta Scott King

"We may encounter many defeats but we must never be defeated." Maya Angelou

"One child, one teacher, one pen and one book can change the world." Malala Yousafza

"Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much." Helen Keller

"No country can truly flourish if it stifles the potential of its women and deprives itself of the contributions of half of its citizens." Michelle Obama

"You must never be fearful about doing what you are doing when it's right." Rosa Parks

"You can waste your life drawing lines or you can live your life crossing them." Shonda Rhimes

"I want every little girl who's told she's bossy to be told instead that she has leadership skills." Sheryl Sandberg, Lean In

Following are the words from *The Women's March* by Ethel Smyth (1911)

Shout, shout up with your song!  
Cry with the wind for the dawn is breaking;  
March, march swing you along,  
Wide blows our banner, and hop is waking.  
Song with its story, dreams with their glory.  
Lo! They call and glad is their word!  
Loud and louder it swells,  
Thunder of freedom, the voice of the Lord!

Long, long - we in the past  
Cowered in dread from the light of heaven,  
Strong, strong - stand we at last,  
Fearless in faith and with sight new given.  
Strength with its beauty, Life with its duty,  
(Hear the voice, oh hear and obey!)  
These, these - becken us on!  
Open your eyes to the blaze of the day.

Comrades - ye who have dared  
First in the battle to strive and sorrow!  
Scorned, spurned - nought have ye cared,  
Raising your eyes to a wider morrow.  
Ways that are weary, days that are dreary,  
Toil and pain by faith ye have borne;  
Hail, hail - victors ye stand,  
Wearing the wreath that the brave have worn!

Life, strife - these two are one,  
Naught can ye win but by faith and daring.  
On, on - that ye have done  
But for the work of today preparing.  
(Laugh in hope, for sure is the end)  
March, march - many as one,  
Shoulder to shoulder and friend to friend.

To listen to the song, go to...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LCtGkCg7trY> and

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PnMjOAxktS0>

By Marge Massarello, League of Women Voters Oak Park and River Forest

Thank you to...

The United States Census Bureau

The National Archives

Mary Gramins

[www.womenshistory.org](http://www.womenshistory.org)

<https://womenshistorymonth.gov>