

Women of the Past



A Life in Leadership

Inez Milholland



The Last of Her Generation

Sarah Kellogg Livingston



The Extraordinary in the Ordinary

Jeanne Robert Foster

Women of the Past

Women of the Past uses the performing arts to portray the impact of important events in a woman's life. The program is a collaborative effort between the Essex County Historical Society and educator, Lindsay Pontius. Lindsay Pontius is a candidate for a PhD in education and has a Master's degree in educational leadership. She has experience working in schools and museums as a theatre artist. She has worked in elementary schools with Shakespeare & Company of Lenox, Massachusetts, and first developed sense-of-place exercises with Calliope Theatre Company and The Bigger Light Theatre Company. The program design is by Bluespot Studio.

Women of the Past is a program for elementary students in grades 2 - 5. Teachers and students choose to study the life of Jeanne Robert Foster, Sarah Kellogg Livingston or Inez Milholland based on their social studies or language arts curriculum. Prior to beginning the dramatic aspects of the program, the teacher and students become familiar with a biography packet of the woman's life and a description of background events. Based on the background material, the students develop a brief but compelling story to re-enact. Students are encouraged to develop an empathy and understanding for the character by considering the courage, intelligence and diligence demonstrated by her life. The students develop the story on their feet playing different characters and using their own language to recreate scenes from the woman's biography. The dramas present history by allowing students to learn how local people and places relate to events on the national level.

This online version of the *Women of the Past* program contains poetry, a timeline, speeches, and activities for teachers to direct the students. A sample script is included, and costuming is available from the Essex County Historical Society as part of the complete package.

Special thanks to the work of Brian Way, Jane Nichols, Paula Langton, Kevin Coleman, Trish Arnold, Karen Beaumont and Susan Dibble for program techniques. Voice work is adapted from study with Kristin Linklater and the Linklater teachers, Ariel Bock and Peter Wittrock, who have spent years working in the public schools. *Women of the Past* is based on programming from the Calliope Theatre Company. Similar programs have been conducted at the Bidwell House, a 1750 house museum in Monterey, Massachusetts, and in the town of Lennup, Germany. Many thanks are owed to Sandy Banks, Leslie Farlow, Irene MacDonnell, Christopher Beaulieu, John Hadden, Emily Windover and Karen White. The Inez Milholland DVD was provided courtesy of John Tepper Marlin, script author and videographer for the Rochester production of "Take Up the Song," and grand-nephew of Inez Milholland Boissevain, the Lewis-born suffragist featured in the play.

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Elizabethtown, NY 2006



Photo courtesy of Eileen Schanvath

A Life in Leadership

Inez Milholland



Photo courtesy of Eileen Scharwath

Inez Milholland

Inez Millholland was born on August 6, 1886. She grew up in New York City and London, and went to school in Germany. She spent summers with her family at the Meadowmount farm in Lewis, New York. Her family was close-knit and she loved spending time with them and surrounded by her many animals.

Her father was a social activist as well as a businessman. He had a contract with the city of New York to develop an underground pneumatic tube system to send mail around the city. Although it never became as popular as he had hoped, Inez's father advertised the vacuum delivery system by sending a puppy or a goldfish in a bowl through the tube, arriving at their destination unharmed.

Inez graduated from Vassar College. She was the captain of her field hockey team and she held records in shotput and the basketball throw. She was the graduation speaker for her class and she starred in many theatricals including playing male leads in the Shakespeare plays.

While in London, she became involved with the Women's Social and Political Union and worked with internationally famous suffragettes such as Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughters. She helped carry the movement to the U.S. by leading a suffrage rally at Vassar much to the dismay of the school's President. He demanded the rally be held off campus so Inez held it in a nearby graveyard. She and her sister, Vida called it the "Graveyard Rally." Inez showed her bravery and athleticism by leading several suffrage parades on her horse, Grey Dawn, often having to ride through riotous crowds of men. She became the poster girl for the suffrage movement. Astride her horse, she echoed the image of Joan of Arc.

Inez got her law degree from New York University and began to fight for wrongly accused prisoners on death row. For many years she was engaged in the struggle to save Charles Steilow who was to be executed. She also found herself in a battle for workers in the Triangle Shirtwaist Company strike, and she championed many labor reform movements.

Inez married Eugene Boissevain, a man from Amsterdam, when she was overseas in 1913. When she returned with him to the U.S., she was denied entrance into the country because she had to give up her citizenship when she married. It was believed that through marriage she became her husband's property, but Inez chose to fight for her citizenship. She and Eugene had no children.

Inez became a war correspondent overseas during World War I. She also traveled across the United States campaigning for the woman's suffrage movement. Her last public words before collapsing on stage in California were to President Wilson: "Mr. President, how long must women wait for liberty?"

What follows is a tribute to the short life of Inez that lasted only thirty years. She died on November 25th, 1916. The diagnosis was pernicious anemia.

Scenes from a Life

Here are some scenes suggestions to get your students started in your circle. We may not know all of the facts but we can imagine what her life was like.

What happened when Inez's father John sent a puppy through his pneumatic tube?

What about goldfish?

Was Inez happy about it or worried?

(Cast: Inez, John, Vida, and Jean)

What was the graveyard rally like? Did Inez and her classmates sneak out of their rooms to get there?

Was it spooky?

Did they get in a lot of trouble?

(Cast: Inez, Vida, other students, Vasser president)

What happened when Inez and her husband Eugene were not allowed back in the country because Inez was no longer a US citizen?

Did she accept that she was now her husband's property?

Did she have a fit?

What did she say?

(Cast: Inez, Eugene, US Immigration officials)

Was it a difficult decision for Inez to continue to tour when her health was bad and she was worried about her client on death row, Stielow?

How did she make her decision?

How much influence did Alice Paul have?

(Cast: Inez, Alice Paul, Eugene, Stielow, perhaps Woodrow Wilson)

What happened when Inez fainted on stage in California?

How did that effect the above cast?

What was the celebration like when women got the vote in 1920?

What She Said:

If you want a nation of strong, vigorous, and well educated citizens, you must see to it that the mothers of those citizens are well born, well bred, well educated and well developed.

Women excel in the care of all living things. We want the mother's point of view. We want her humanity and her zeal for the conservation and upbuilding of our laws and our administration.

We shall no longer have a world of types but of individuals; no longer a world of monotony but of spontaneity; we shall have courageous people instead of cowards; liberty lovers, men and women of principle and faith and spirituality and joyousness. The world set free!

What She Knew:

Her summer home ...

- Meadowmount, "the Big House"
- Four thousand acres
- Ducks, geese
- A two acre trout pond, two St. Bernards
- Eight foot fencing for deer, elk, and a moose

New York City ...

- Pneumatic mail tubes which send the family bible wrapped in the American flag, kittens, puppies, a bowl of six goldfish around the city
- There were fifty-four miles of tube in NYC which could send five million letters daily
- Her father, John, championed unpopular causes and believed in the Golden Rule
- The man that talked about Ireland for so long and unpopular causes

Life as a River

What kind of leader was Inez?

What kind of leader are each of you?

A recent study describes leadership as having vision, clarity, energy, resilience and flexibility.

Spend some time with your class relating leadership to the metaphor of a river.

Have students draw the river that is Inez's life and then draw the river that is life so far for them. If they have had a move or major change - that is a bend in the river.

Perhaps there is a waterfall? Deep ponds? Goes underground?

What is the source of their river?



Photo courtesy of Essex County Historical Society

What Edna Said:

Edna St. Vincent Millay was a poet in the early to mid-twentieth century. She attended Vassar soon after Inez. Inez's husband Eugene married Edna several years after Inez's death. Edna offered this ode to Inez at the State Capitol in 1916 at the Christmas Memorial.

I that was proud and valiant am no more
Save as a dream that wanders wide and late,
Save as a wind that rattles the stout door,
Troubling the ashes in the sheltered grate.
The stone will perish; I shall be twice dust.
Only my standard on a taken hill
Can cheat the mildew and the red-brown rust
And make immortal my adventurous will.
Even now the silk is tugging at the staff.
Take up the song; forget the epitaph.

There are some striking visual and physical images presented in this sonnet. Ask students to draw or create a human sculpture of the standard on a hill with the silk tugging at the staff or take a look at the images of Inez on horseback and unpack how and why she made a difference in the lives of men and women in this country.



Photo courtesy of Maggie Bartley

Inez of Many Talents

Inez, the jock ...

- competed in college track and field (shot put)
- was Field Hockey Captain at Vassar
- played Varsity Basketball (a free throw champ)

Inez, the actress ...

- played Romeo in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. (Remember Vassar was, at that time, an all girls school.)
- engaged in a deadly sword fight with the Juliet's cousin Tybalt and won.
- insulted all women as Benedick in Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*.

So many talents and outspoken too. She was graduation speaker. Her father, John Milholland, inspired her to "sing to the world" while her mother modeled a woman who "sang to the nest".

Have your class unpack this metaphor:

- *Is the nest more important to the world or vise versa?*



Photo courtesy of Essex County Historical Society

Inez Quotes Shakespeare:

These were some of her lines ...

He jests at scars that never felt a wound...
But soft what light from yonder window breaks
It is the east and Juliet is the sun.

... and later, to revenge his best friend Mercutio's death, he fights Juliet's cousin, Tybalt. Here is the scene.

Benvolio: What are thou hurt?

Mercutio: Ay a scratch, a scratch. Marry tis enough.

Why the devil came you between us? I was hurt under your arm. Ask for me tomorrow and you shall find me a grave man.

Benvolio: Romeo, brave Mercutio is dead. Here comes the furious Tybalt back again.

Tybalt: Thou wretched boy. *(They fight. Tybalt dies)*

Benvolio: Romeo away begone. The Prince will doom the death if thou art taken. Away!

Romeo: O, I am fortunes fool.

Inez also played Benedick in "Much Ado About Nothing" ...

Benedick: I will not do women the wrong to mistrust any, I will do myself the right to trust none;
and the fine is (for which I may go the finer)
I will live a bachelor.

Beatrice: I thank God I am of your humor for that. I'd rather hear my dog bark at a crow than a man swear he loves me.

Benedick: God keep your ladyship still in that mind! So some gentleman shall scape a scratched face.

Beatrice: Scratching could not make it worse and t'were such a face as yours.

Benedick: Well, you are a rare parrot teacher.

Explore Shakespeare's language and investigate it's influence on Inez as an activist and orator.

We Want the Vote

nez said:

We want the vote, not for the sake of the vote itself, but as a means to an end. That end is the care and preservation and upbuilding of the lives of men and women and children.

Her support team of friends ...

Eugene Boissevain, her husband. Inez called him “the affinity of my heart and soul.”

Vida Millholland, her sister, an accomplished opera singer. She was by Inez’s side from the graveyard rally until Inez’s death in 1916. She carried Inez’s banner and rode on a white horse in a pageant honoring Inez at Meadowmount.

Alice Paul, led the campaign that finally won the vote for women. Inez’s father called her “a nerve network of steel, about a cast iron spinal column.”

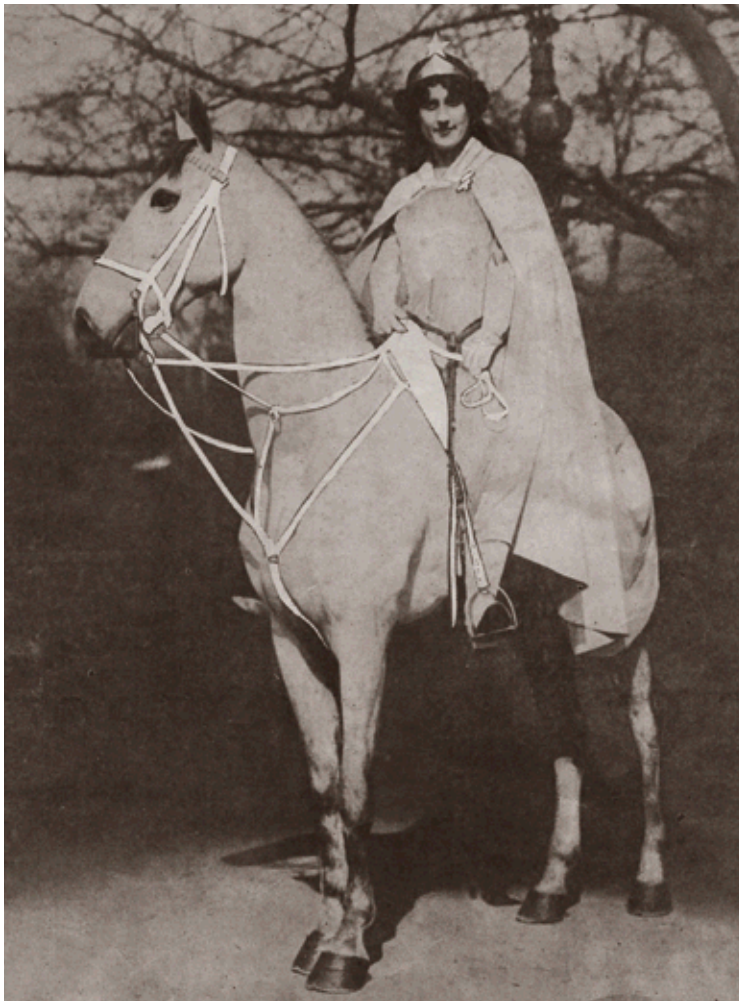


Photo courtesy of Essex County Historical Society

The Words that Won the Vote

The words that won the vote belonged to Inez ...

Re-create the picket signs.

In order to get the attention of President Wilson who had WWI on his mind, Alice Paul and other members of the National Woman's Party stood outside the White House every day throughout a cold winter bearing placards remembering Inez.

*How long
must women wait
for LIBERTY?*

Left:
*Inez's last public words before she
collapsed on stage in California.*

*Forward, out of error,
Leave behind the night,
Forward through the darkness,
Forward into light.*



The Last of Her Generation

Sarah Kellogg Livingston



Photo courtesy of Essex County Historical Society

Sarah Kellogg Livingston

Sarah Kellogg Livingston was born on November 5th, 1841. Her life spanned nearly ninety-seven years. She was one of eight children born to Orlando Kellogg and Polly Woodruff. Both of her parents had ancestors who were pioneer settlers of this "Pleasant Valley". Their ancestors had much to do with the building of homes in the wilderness and did valiant service for their country in the Battle of Plattsburgh.

On December 6, 1859, when Sarah was eighteen, she watched the body of John Brown and his attendants travel through Elizabethtown to the Essex County courthouse. Her future husband-to-be, Augustus Cincinnatus Hand Livingston (called Hand), was one of the young men who stood guard over the body through the night. In the morning, it was transported to the Brown home in North Elba for burial. In 1861, when Sarah was twenty, Hand joined a company of local men to fight in the Civil War. Hand fought in the Battle of Bull Run, the first major battle of the Civil War. The next year, Sarah accompanied her father to Washington, D.C. to the inauguration of Abraham Lincoln. Her father, Orlando Kellogg, was a congressman and a close personal friend of the president. Sarah danced at Lincoln's inaugural ball.

Sarah did not marry Hand until 1879 when she was thirty-eight years old. By that time, the Civil War had ended, Hand owned and operated the Elizabethtown Post, and Sarah's father-in-law was fully recuperated from his Civil War injuries. Robert Livingston had been injured in the Battle of Drury's Bluff. He had wounds in his shoulder and leg and he had lost the tip of his toe. Hand died in 1900 when Sarah was fifty-nine. She took over the running of the newspaper.

Sarah never remarried. She had one adopted child. She maintained a great interest in the events of her day. From her home on Main Street in Elizabethtown, she lived during another major war, World War I. She also lived at a time when women's suffrage was a major issue. She witnessed Inez Millholland, from the neighboring town of Lewis, strive for world peace, labor reform and the rights of women. In 1920, at the age of seventy-nine, Sarah finally gained the right to vote.

Scenes from a Life

Here are some scenes suggestions to get your students started in your circle.
We may not know all of the facts but we can imagine what her life was like.

What happened when John Brown's body came through the streets of Elizabethtown on its way to North Elba?

(Cast: 8 year old Sarah, Hand, Orlando Kellogg, and Mary Brown)

What happened when Hand led the charge in the Civil War?

What happened to Sarah back in Elizabethtown when Hand's father Robert arrived injured?

What happened when Sarah went to the White House and the Inaugural Ball?

Did she meet President Lincoln?

What did she say?

What kind of news and changes did Hand report in the paper?

Was it fast paced work?

Did Sarah help?

What about after Hand died?

How did Sarah feel about women's rights and getting the vote?



Photo courtesy of Essex County Historical Society

What She Wore:

Sarah wore this dress to Abraham Lincoln's inaugural ball in 1862. Her father, Orlando Kellogg was a congressman and a close personal friend of Lincoln.

How old was Sarah when she danced at the ball in this dress?

Who could have imagined that Sarah would next be attending a memorial service for President Lincoln?

Have your students do some detective work to find out what happened soon after the inaugural.

*Sarah's ball gown:
Collection of Essex County Historical Society
Adirondack History Center Museum*



Make a Wax Museum

Using props and costumes, have your class divide into seven groups and make sculptures of the following events that Sarah witnessed in her lifetime.

- 1) Guarding John Brown's body in the Elizabethtown courthouse overnight
See if students can illustrate the danger that John Brown's enemies might present. After all, the guards were school age children.
- 2) A. C. H. Livingston (called Hand) going off to war
- 3) Abraham Lincoln's inaugural ball
- 4) Taking care of her injured father-in-law, Robert Livingston who had a bullet lodged "a way down in shinbone alley"
- 5) Covering stories for the Elizabethtown Post
- 6) Meeting Inez Millholland, the famous suffragette
- 7) In 1920, finally getting to vote

Give your students the responsibility of doing the math to find out Sarah's age for each wax museum sculpture, choosing the correct props or costume pieces and placing Sarah in the sculpture.



Photo courtesy of Essex County Historical Society

Then and Now

Using the timeline, compare and contrast events that happened during Sarah's life time with present day issues and innovations.

Do we still have banned books? Harry Potter? The Davinci Code? Is there a controversy over Darwin?

What is popular now in place of "velocipeding?" Are there innovations today as life changing as the washing machine, electricity or novocain?



Photo courtesy of Essex County Historical Society

Timeline

Selected events that Sarah may have encountered over her lifetime

1841 Born

1850 Uncle Tom's Cabin by Harriet Beecher Stowe is published

1852 First horse-drawn steam fire engine

1854 Florence Nightengale departs for the Crimean War

1858 Hamilton E. Smith invents mechanical washing machine

1895 Darwin publishes Origin of the Species (Sarah is 14 years old)

1863 Emancipation Proclamation

1865 Lewis Carroll publishes Alice in Wonderland & the first railroad train hold-up happens in Northbend, Ohio

1868 "Velocipeding" or bicycling becomes popular

1871 First professional baseball association is formed - National League
The Indian Appropriations Act: all Indians are now "wards of the nation"

1878 Enter electricity (Sarah is 37 years old)

1900 The American (baseball) League is formed in Chicago & the automobile is noted to be "an expensive luxury for the man who does not need one", it is named the "devils weapon"

1905 Einstein invents Novocain

1937 Artie Shaw forms a swing band featuring Billie Holiday as vocalist



The Extraordinary in the Ordinary

Jeanne Robert Foster



Photo courtesy of The Adirondaack Museum

Jeanne Robert Foster

The woman known as Jeanne Robert Foster was originally named Julia Oliver. She was born in 1879. Her father, Frank, was a farmer and a lumberjack living off the land that his father had worked before him. He loved the land. He also was an outspoken and “fiery” abolitionist. Her mother, Lizzie, was a college graduate and a teacher. The family was poor and as a child Julia had to live and work outside the home to survive. Julia’s parents didn’t always see eye to eye and she sometimes was called upon to be the buffer between her parents. They had an enormous effect on their daughter as Julia transformed into Jeanne. She became a teacher at the age of sixteen.

Jeanne was married at seventeen to a man named Matlock Foster. He was fifteen years older than Jeanne. Matlock took Jeanne away from her rural life to Rochester and New York City. In the cities, Victorian values prescribed very different roles for women than Jeanne had experienced as a worker and farmer in the Adirondacks. The idea that a wife was her husband’s property was unfamiliar to Jeanne. Instead, her husband encouraged Jeanne to get her college degree. She then went on to study acting and joined a repertory company. She also studied philosophy at Harvard with fellow Adirondack lover, William James. As an actress, Jeanne was discovered and became a model. Her image was a symbol for the women of her day. She eventually taught herself to type and began to write. Her writings told of the beauty and hardship of life in the rural Adirondacks.

Jeanne traveled to many places in her life time. She was befriended by great artists and writers, James Joyce, William Butler Yeats, and Picasso, to name a few. Although as an adult she lived a celebrated life, she never forgot her childhood home. She wrote poems and stories reflecting the land she loved and the people she knew growing up in the Adirondacks.

Scenes from a Life

Here are some scenes suggestions to get your students started in your circle.
We may not know all of the facts but we can imagine what her life was like.

What happened when the little girl Julia was thought to be homely?

And what happened when she lived in poverty and her mother and father sent her away to be a hired girl?

(Cast: Julia, Frank, and Lizzy Oliver)

What happened when Jeanne moved to Rochester from the Adirondacks and she was told that she was unequal to men and there was no need for her to make decisions because she had no right or vote?

What did her parent's tell her?

Is this where she made the decision to dress as a boy?"

(Cast: Julia, Rochester boy and girl, Frank and Lizzy)

What happened when Jeanne became a model in the city?

A student at Harvard?

What was it like when she met Picasso?



Photo courtesy of Essex County Historical Society

From Here to There

An activity that gets students moving and exploring situations from Foster's poems.

Start- up:

Push desks aside or sign up for a spacious multi-purpose room.

Get students gathered on one side of the room facing the other side, preferably overlooking the longest space.

As a group, have them simply walk from here to there.

Once the two spaces "here" and "there" are clearly defined add direction to their travel through images from the text. Each student decides their own pattern of movement. There is no right or wrong to this journey.

Examples:

- Crossing a river on stepping stones
- Clearing a forest, felling trees to make pasture land for animals and room for a house.
- Scrambling up a mountain to get to the peak. It is somewhere between "here" and "there". Each class member must decide "where" for him or herself and then physically create the descent. Try the mountain scramble in groups of three or four.
- Ask the class to work together to skid logs down the river from here to there. First talk about possible dangers and how they might work together as a class to keep each other safe and get the job done. You can use chairs or desks as rocks, waterfalls, or other obstacles.

Language Shaping a World

This activity is a fun opportunity to viscerally experience and re-create Jeanne Robert Foster's language and the sense of place and history in her poetry.

Use a drum, cymbal, even shaking car keys can work. What follows are suggestions or kinesthetic prompts for your class.

When I tap the drum once - you will begin to move your bodies to become the tallest, most monstrous and lively mountain that you can imagine. When I bang the drum twice you will become a statue of that mountain.

Now, when I hit the drum again you will pursue a task with great urgency. You will become a tree climber pruning an enormous limb off of a tall tree.

Now, you are on the ground "slashing down a pine".

Your hands are full of resin and stick to everything.

Now, you are a silly "daft" person with your head in the clouds.

You're "peering at the stars". (Ask them to show you how is peering different from staring?)

Now you are that same "daft" one climbing your monster mountain and reaching for the stars

Now you are reaching for a dream across oceans all the way to Paris, France (just like Jeanne Robert Foster).

And now, you happen to be in Paris, France speaking in your best "French" or accent with famous people all around you.

Suddenly mid-conversation you feel something pulling you from deep inside. The mountain within you longs to go home. And you slowly come back to the "lively mountain" you once were.

After the exercise, review the poem *The Wilderness is Strong* and talk about what it feels like and then what it means.

Building a Play

You have language, you have characters and situations, you have conflicts and dreams.

How might students in the class begin to put these ingredients together. Explore again all three poetry cards and then begin with the old voice in “Shanty Days” that shuts his or her eyes and remembers.

Re-create the memory of skidding or “running” logs down the river.

Have your class form a tableau or statue of the mountain people, river people, field people or island people.

Have Jeanne emerge from the island and then move to cities like New York, Boston and then Paris. Your students can make up details and possible conflicts that might have happened. Then create the moment or moments when Jeanne is called back to the mountains.

Let students imagine when that moment might happen: was it homesickness?

Something that reminded her of home? Create a scene using the poems where Jeanne describes her home.

Come back to the old voice remembering.



Photo courtesy of Essex County Historical Society

Shanty Days

Excerpts from Shanty Days

*It's hard to find the log road in the woods
Or where they were; the shanty days are gone.
But still I think the old days in the woods
Will be alive as long as one remembers them.
Sometimes it's hard for me to figure out
Why no one talks about old shanty days
Except myself in these parts hereabout...*

*Maybe I've lived too long.... All men know now
When lumber's needed there's a power sawmill
They set up in a stand of spruce and pine.
There's hardly men alive who slept on bunks
In lumber shanties deep in the North Woods,
Choppers and limbers and the men who hauled the logs
Down to the river for the "run" in spring,
Or know a skidway, or how many "markets" cut,
Or why we peeled the hemlock bark in May.
If you speak up they only stare at you
And wonder where you've slept the years away...*

*Sometimes I sit down on a mossy stump
And shut my eyes... The shanty days come back,
I hear the choppers' axes on the trees,
The sound of limbing and the clank of chains
Hauling the logs down to the old skidway,
The shouts of "Timber!"-*

*It don't last long. I open up my eyes
And struggle back to what we call life now.*

The Wilderness is Strong

*Here in the wilderness folks will tell you
To be careful about the place you live,
For there is something in the mountains
And the hills that is stronger than people,
And you will grow like the place where you live.
The hands of the mountain reach out
With bindings that hold the heart forever.*

*Those who live close to the high mountains
Are different from men along the rivers
And those on the intervalles and cleared farms.
The mountain men know one another by signs,
And river men have their own kind of speech.
And strangest of all are the folks on the islands
Who always hear the lapping of water
And see the tall scarlet cardinal flowers.
If an island man's children leave their home
They always return; they are drawn back.*

*Wilderness people are a special breed.
They have something that's not hearing or seeing
Reaching out from the mountains to touch them.*



*Sarah Kellogg Livingston:
The Last of Her Generation*

Introduction:

The following script was developed at the Moriah Central School in Port Henry, New York using the *Women of the Past* program. It was a collaborative effort led by teaching artist, Lindsay Pontius together with fifth grade teacher, Kathy Ploufe, and her class.

The program follows the time line of Sarah Kellogg Livingston, born in Elizabethtown, New York in 1841. Her life spanned nearly ninety-seven years. The script tries to humorously answer the question, “Why did Sarah and Hand (A.C.H. Livingston) wait so long to get married?” Sarah was thirty-eight years old on her wedding day.

The script is included in this packet as an example of what can be developed in the classroom using the *Women of the Past* biographies. Feel free to use this script as an example for students to act out, or develop new scripts featuring the three Adirondack women and their perspectives on their times.

The script borrows from the writings of Stephen Vincent Benet’s *John Brown’s Body*, Edna West Teale’s *Adirondack Tales* and many primary sources in the archives of the Essex County Historical Society.

Cast of Characters

Sarah, begins as a young girl and ages with each scene, can be played by several actors

Mary Brown, John Brown’s widow

Orlando Kellogg, Sarah’s Father

Polly, Sarah’s mother

A.C.H Livingston (Hand), Sarah’s friend and later husband

Confederate Joe

Soldiers

the Ladies Auxiliary

Three town gossips, that act as a chorus throughout the play

Abraham Lincoln

Reporters

Lucy and James (can be in place of Sarah and Hand in the parlor scene)

Inez Milholland, a world renown suffragette who summered in Lewis

George L. Brown, Editor of *The Elizabethtown Post*

Ora Boynton, Sarah’s adopted daughter

Scene 1: Mourning

Mourner 1: John Brown's body lies a-moldering in the grave.

Mourner 2: He will not come again.

Mourner 3: He has gone back North. The slaves have forgotten his eyes.

Mourner 1: John Brown's body lies a-moldering in the grave.

Mary Brown: *He sang to me before he died...
Bind my white bones together- hollow them
To skeleton pipes of music. When the wind
Blows from the budded Spring, the song will blow.*

Mourner 1: John Brown's body lies a-moldering in the grave.

Sarah: Not yet. He's still above ground on this chilly December afternoon in Elizabethtown.

Hand: True. We've agreed to watch the body in the courthouse. We don't want any harm to come to him before he makes his way with you to North Elba, Mrs. Brown.

Mary: Thank you.

Wagon Driver: Early morning we'll take him up over the hill, all right with you Mrs. Brown? Just gotta rest the horses.

Mary: Of course. We'll bury him tomorrow.

(a crowd of gossips follow the mourners)

Gossip 1: Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry was the work of a madman.

Gossip 2: I don't care what laws he broke. I know that he was right.

Gossip 3: He broke the law. They were right to hang him.

Wagon Driver: The law is our yard stick. It measures well. His trial was painfully fair.

Mary: There was a month between the sentencing and the hanging. The good that is growing out of it is wonderful. If he had preached in the pulpit ten such lives as he had lived, he could not have done so much good as he did in that one speech to court.

Gossip 1: John Brown was a stone.

Mary: A stone that eroded to a cutting edge.

Sarah: *(to audience)* John Brown said, "I, John Brown, am now quite certain that the crimes of this guilty land will never be purged away but with blood." It makes me worry for our country.

Mary: There is a song in his bones.

Confederate Joe: Cotton will grow next year. Slaves will be slaves next year in spite of his bones.

Mary: The song will come.
"Bind my white bones together..."

Confederate Joe: We will stop the song.

Hand: There will be a war all right. Slavery will need to be ending.

Confederate Joe: Oh really now. And what do you know about it.

Hand: I know it isn't right.

Confederate Joe: The newspaper said John Brown was an insane man. Isn't that right Mrs. Brown?

Mary: I never knew of his insanity, until I read it in the newspapers. He was a clear-headed man.

Confederate Joe: He could have pleaded insanity. You could have wept and admitted he was insane and probably saved your husband's life, Mrs. Brown.

Hand: Now hold on there just a minute. John Brown is dead let the woman grieve.

Sarah: She supported her husband's convictions and upheld his image. Now John Brown is a martyr and the country will pick up his song.

Confederate Joe: Well then, as Shakespeare says, "let slip the dogs of war".
(there is a scuffle and shouting)

Hand: Let him rest in peace. We must guard him. Tomorrow we shall talk of war.

Scene2a: Before the Inaugural

Nosy Reporter: Mr. Kellogg, I hear you are quite connected with the president.

Scoop: I hear he accepts your calling card first and holds audience with you for hours. Is it true, Mr. Kellogg?
Orlando Kellogg: Well, let's just say, I can keep Abe Lincoln in a good humor.

Sarah: Father, do you think I will get to meet President Lincoln?

Orlando: I don't see why not.

Sarah: *(to audience)* There we were: February 1965 in Washington at Lincoln's second inaugural. The war was still raging on. John Brown was right about the blood shed. Lincoln was about to give his address... but first, let me tell you about Hand.

Scene 2b: Flashback to the Battlefield

Sarah: After the firing at Fort Sumter, when the president called for 75,000 troops, Hand was one of the first to enlist. I tried to talk him out of it.

Hand, don't go yet. Why can't you wait it out.

Hand: It's something I gotta do.

Sarah: Dress-uniform boys who rubbed their buttons brighter than gold
And they went to war with an air, as if they went to a ball.

Two Ladies: The ladies from Elizabethtown presented the flag.

Lady 1: And then, the men just marched away.

Lady 2: Hand was with Company K in Virginia.

Lady 1: At the first battle of Bull Run.

Soldier 1: It is wet and uncommonly hot.

Soldier 2: We march till we can't stand up anymore.

Soldier 1: I wish they could see us here. I wish everybody at home could see us here. They would know what war is like.

Soldier 2: We are still patriotic. We are going to fight.

Two Ladies: Their guns were heavy and hot.

Two soldiers: Up the hill again?

Hand: Come on boys!

Lady 1: They were tired of running uphill but the boys of Company K gathered for a final charge.

Lady 2: Hand was their leader, Captain Dwyer being sick that day.

Hand: We're exposed to the fire of artillery in the front and on our flanks. You ready.

Men: Ready.

Hand: All right, let's move out. Charge!

Ladies: They met with success.

Sarah: They defeated Jackson in this first battle of Bull Run. Hand was promoted and then he was able to retire from the army and come home.

Lincoln: *(steps up to address the audience-cheers and applause)* Fellow countrymen
Fondly do we hope - fervently do we pray - that his mighty scourge of war might speedily pass away.
Let us bind up the nation's wounds
To care for him who shall have borne the battle....

Sarah: *(to aud.)* May 1864. Hand got a letter.

Hand: *(reading letter)* Father's been shot three times at the Battle of Drury's Bluff. One bullet in his leg... he says, "a way down in shinbone alley", his shoulder and his toe was shot off. He was made a major.

Sarah: Robert Livingston was in the hospital for over a year before he returned to his family. Hand had taken over the local paper, *The Elizabethtown Post*. I feel sorry for Hand that his father is still in the hospital but I can't think about that now. I am about to meet President Lincoln and dance at the Inaugural Ball.

Scene 3: The Ball

Lincoln: *(finishing speech)* May we achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations. Now, dance.

(couples begin to dance as Lincoln wanders the room)

Dancer 1: Lincoln was six foot one in his stocking feet.

Orlando: *(dancing with daughter Sarah)* And knotty and tough as a hickory rail.

Dancer 2: His hands were always too big for white kid gloves.

Lincoln: Ah, my dear friend Kellogg .How do you do?

Orlando: Very well. May I present my daughter Sarah.

Lincoln: Delighted to meet you. You know Sarah if it were not for your father's stories, I should get blue sometimes.

Sarah: *(as she takes his hands she talks to the audience)* Who would have thought that in just a few months this man would be assassinated.

Nosy Reporter: The fatal shots were startling.

Scoop: I saw the gleam of a dagger in the assassins right hand. He held it point down...

Sarah: And four months later... we followed my father that great hearted speaker to his grave. Although the war did end and I got to meet the President, 1865 wasn't a great year.

Scene 4: Parlors

Narrator: 1865 to 1879... fourteen long years. You may ask why didn't Hand and Sarah marry. They had plenty of time but didn't. They even had marriage between their families in common. Sarah's brother married Hand's sister. By day Hand worked as editor of *The Elizabethtown Post*. He was known as the friendliest man in town. He had no enemies...

James: They never married because they had to date in the Parlor.

Parlor Cat: oh... The parlor...

Lucy: The dreaded parlor.
Parlors weren't created to be lived in but to make an impression.

James: A man's trousers seemed as slippery on the cold horsehair sofa as a sled on a toboggan slide in winter. He had to sit stiffly there to keep anchored.

Cat: The parlor used to have a lot to do with bringing up the children.

James: It was a solemn place, opened only on special occasions.

Lucy: Boys and girls were incarcerated there for special company, weddings, funerals, and for courtin'.

James: Courtin' began with "him" taking "her" home from some social gathering. Then he came to see her of an evening.

Cat: A fire was kindled in the parlor stove... And it was putting him in the parlor with her and heatin' it up special for the courtin' hours.

James: Surrounding him with family responsibilities.

Lucy: The air in the old-fashioned parlor was dead...

Cat: That may have drugged the courting couple...

James: Windows of the parlor were seldom opened.

Lucy: It was too sacred a place to allow any wanton dust clouds access therein.

James: So they courted in the parlor and...

All: Were married in the parlor.

Cat: The baby was baptized in the parlor, if not in church.

Lucy: And in the parlor the minister said the last words over grandfather and grandmother and then father and mother.

James: A new home wasn't complete without a parlor.

Lucy: And the bride must be willing to slave at many things and pinch and save to furnish its cold glory.

James: Finally in 1879, when Sarah was 38 and Hand was 40... they were married.

All: What took you so long?

Scene 5: Murder Most Foul

(The three Gossips enter)

Gossip 1: The railroad came in 1876. Oh... we're chugging thru time now.

Gossip 2: Soon after Hand and Sarah were married they traveled by train to New York City.

Gossip 3: And 1882 was the year of the murder...

Gossip 1: Murder, the horror of it fascinates me...

Gossip 2: Murder, murder most foul...

Gossip 3: ...the murder of Betsy Wells.

Gossip 1: Henry Debosnys took his wife, Betsy Wells for a drive to Port Henry, or so he said.

Gossip 2: It was meant to be her last.

Gossip 3: Her body was found in the woods.

Gossip 2: Most of the available males were called out on a manhunt.

Gossip 1: We all sat up tense and terrified afraid that he was hiding on our farm. Listening for any little noise...

Gossip 2: Plomp... stillness... plomp... staring at the bedroom door in the faint light of the night lamp.

(They all hear a scary noise)

Gossip 1: What is it?

(Gossip 3 screams)

(Gossip 2 looks)

Gossip 2: A big fat rat.

Gossip 1: The murderer had been found but we hadn't heard. That was long before there were telephones.

Gossip 2: Henry Debosnys was duly tried, sentence and hung in Elizabethtown.

Gossip 3: Hundred went to the hanging.

Sarah: They sold tickets. Hand covered it for the paper.

Hand: It was the last hanging in Essex County.

Scene 6: Headlines

George Brown: On January 28th 1900, Augustus C. Hand Livingston dies. Sarah, Mrs. A.C.H. Livingston, continued to run the paper.

Sarah: With the help of George L. Brown, Mr. Livingston's long time manager and editor. I kept busy reporting the changes around here. Like...

1901 - An automobile glove was found on the street.

George: 1902 - Trotting on the Ice at Port Henry: The gentleman's driving club will give three days racing on the ice in February.

Sarah: 1908 - Fire destroys four buildings in the village of Westport. The fire interrupted the service on the long distance telephone line and put out electric light there.

George: 1912 - To Eddie Hart of Princeton belongs the honor of being the best tackle of the year. Although he is 200 pounds, he is one of the fastest men of the season.

Sarah: In 1915 the population is one thousand two hundred twenty-two.

George: For sale - A good bicycle, apply at this office

The European war situation: late activities are that the Russians are winning big victories and that the French are gaining ground. The Germans still claim they are going to win.

Sarah: Listen to this... The biggest suffrage demonstration ever attempted in this country... The parade developed into a riot. The marching women were insulted, assaulted, 300 were seriously injured. Miss Inez Milholland headed the parade on horseback and drove her mount into the mob several times.

George: *(reading)* The most effective spokesman of the suffrage cause in America is Inez Milholland. "Isn't that John Milholland's daughter who grew up down the road at Meadowmount?"

(camera's flash, there is a big hubbub as Inez enters)

Inez: I am trying to discharge my own individual debt to society by improving the conditions of life for women and children.

Sarah: New York Judges endorse Equal Suffrage in unqualified terms.

George: New York City is a suffrage hive. Inez Milholland from Lewis, went over to Europe, a war correspondent, she says merry England has sobered since the war began.

Sarah: In September 1915, Inez returned to New York and arrived at the train station and was taken to Meadowmount Ranch in Lewis. She visited Elizabethtown and made a brief call to the newspaper office.

(Inez joins Sarah and George)

Inez: How come the paper says the property of the A.C.H. Livingston estate, George L. Brown editor. You continue to run it and yet, your name is nowhere on it or in it?

Sarah: Inez, you know as well as I that once we marry we become part of our husband's property. I don't like it any better than you did when you were denied US Citizenship after you married Mr. Boissevain and traveled to his birthplace in Holland.

Inez: You're right you know, but we've got the vote in nine states... I'm going on a speaking tour of the West. Don't you worry Sarah - we'll get the vote yet! *(Inez hugs Sarah and exits.)*

Sarah: That was the last I saw of Inez. She led a speaking tour out west.

Inez: Free women of the West, President Wilson has had the power to liberate women of the United States and he continues to refuse his help. We have nothing but our spirits to rely on, but spirit is invincible. Will you join us by voting against President Wilson? Join me in Asking President Wilson: "Mr. President, how long must women wait for liberty?"

(Inez collapses)

Sarah: Inez collapsed and was taken to a hospital. President Wilson was elected.

Inez: Forward out of error, forward into light.

Sarah: At her Christmas day memorial in the Capitol, Maud Younger addressed all women - "Inez lived loving liberty, and had liberty on her lips when she was struck down. Let's finish the task she could not finish."

Scene 7: The Finale

George: 1918. Orders for the new draft
1919. Great boom in Adirondack Ore
- - - -. First airplanes at Lake Placid

(Gossips begin to take over headlines)

Gossip 1: Salvation Army Valiant in War Having served gloriously in the trenches and coming back overseas for peace time activities.

Gossip 2: And they thought we couldn't fight.

Gossip 3: March 1920. The tractor is supplanting the horse entirely.

Gossip 1: August 1920. Tennessee became the 36th and last state needed to ratify the Amendment for women to vote.

Sarah: By November of that year, I was 79 years old and I was able to cast my vote.

George: When Sarah was almost 97 years old, she passed from this life at her home on Maple Street.

Ora: Mrs. Sarah Kellogg Livingston was an old-time gentlewoman. She loved her home. Filled with her treasures and mementos of bygone days.
She left behind her adopted daughter Ora Boynton who has now become Mrs. Evans.

George: She was the last of her generation.

Ora: She was laid to rest beside those she had loved and lost a while.

The End