



IDAHO STATE
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY



Women in Idaho History

1805 Idaho native Sacajawea returns home to the Salmon area with Lewis and Clark. Later that year a Nez Perce woman, Watkuweis, is credited by many with saving the expedition.



Elvina Moulton

1872 Polly Bemis moves to the Salmon River. The Northwest's most famous Chinese woman is the subject of four books and the movie, "Thousand Pieces of Gold."

1878 Elvina Moulton becomes the only African American charter member of the Boise Presbyterian Church.

1883 May Arkwright moves to the Silver Valley and marries Levi Hutton in 1887. They purchase a stake in the Hercules Mine, and strike it rich. The Huttons engage in many social causes, and May, often teaming with Abigail Scott Duniway, becomes one of the leading suffragettes in Idaho and the Northwest.



Polly Bemis

1884 Mary Hallock Foote moves to Boise. An accomplished novelist and artist, her life and writings serve as the basis for the Pulitzer Prize winning book by Wallace Stegner, *Angle of Repose*.



Permeal
French

1891 Emma Edwards of Boise designs the state seal, the first, and only state seal designed by a woman.

1896 The Idaho legislature grants women the right to vote in state and local elections, the fourth state to grant suffrage.

1898 Permeal French elected as first woman Superintendent of Public Instruction. Clara L. Campbell, Boise, Harriett F. Noble, Idaho City, and Mary A. Wright, Rathdrum, elected to the Idaho House of Representative and became the first women to serve in the Idaho legislature.

1899 Jenny Hughes receives a Bachelor Science degree, becoming the first African American graduate of the University of Idaho.

1902 Mable Gray becomes Idaho's first official fire lookout attendant at the Bertha Hill look out northeast of Orofino; her lookout consists of a perch on a tall snag.

1921 Nell Shipman films and produces "The Girl from God's Country" from her studio on Priest Lake, the first movie made in Idaho.

1928 Margaret Cobb Ailshie becomes publisher of the *Idaho Statesman* (serving until 1959).

1931 Sister Alfreda Elsensohn founds the Historical Museum at St. Gertrude Monastery, one of Idaho's oldest museums. The state's highest award for outstanding museum service is named for her.

1932 Myrtle Enking of Gooding is elected State Treasurer, the first in a line of 5 women to hold that post consecutively until 1959; indeed, the string continued until 1999, interrupted by only one man.

1936 Moscow native Carol Ryrie Brink wins the nation's most prestigious literary award for children's literature, the Newbery Award, for *Caddie Woodlawn*.



Nell Shipman



Sister Alfreda

1948 Gretchen Fraser of Sun Valley wins gold and silver Olympic medals in skiing. She becomes the first of several Idaho women Olympic champions, including Andrea Lloyd, Picabo Street, Stacy Dragilla, and Kristin Armstrong.



Kristin Armstrong

1952 Gracie Bowers Pfost is elected as the first Idaho woman to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives; she serves five terms.



Amy Trice

1964 Dorthy Johnson of Pocatello becomes the first African American to gain the title "Miss Idaho, USA." Later that summer, the same year Congress passed the Civil Rights Act, she becomes the first African American to become a semi-finalist for the Miss USA Pageant.

1974 Amy Trice leads the Kootenai Tribe in declaring war on the U.S. No shots are fired, but the Tribe gains a reservation, clinic, and housing.



Gracie Bowers

1984: Jeanne Givens, a Coeur d'Alene tribal leader, becomes Idaho's first Native American woman elected to the Idaho Legislature. She served until 1988.



Maxine Bell

1988 Maxine Bell, a retired school librarian from Jerome, was first elected to the Idaho House. Bell has served 30 years and her last term (15th) in 2018. She served as the co-chair (with Senator Shawn Keough) of the Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee. Bell also served as the Woman's Chair of the Idaho Farm Bureau from 1980-1992.

1989 Kathryn Albertson Park is dedicated, the third in a chain of parks, including Julia Davis and Ann Morrison, named for Boise women.

1992 Linda Cople Trout becomes the first woman appointed to the Idaho Supreme Court.

1996 Shawn Keough was first elected to the Idaho Legislature. Keough who co-chaired the Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee, is the longest-serving female senator in the history of the state. She has served 22 years and completed her 11th term in 2018.



Shawn Keough



Susan B. Chew

2006 Susan B. "Sue" Chew is elected to the Idaho House of Representatives becoming Idaho's first Asian legislator.

2007 Barbara Morgan flies on the Space Shuttle to the International Space Station. A former teacher at McCall-Donnelly Elementary, she attended the Teacher in Space program, and later became a full-time astronaut.



Barbara Morgan

2008 Sarah Palin, born in Sandpoint and a North Idaho College and University of Idaho graduate, runs on the Republican ticket for Vice President.

2010 Cherie Buckner-Webb of Boise wins election to the Idaho House of Representatives, becoming Idaho's first African American legislator.



Paulette Jordan

2014 Kaitlyn Farrington of Hailey wins gold in the women's half-pipe competition at the Sochi Olympics. The first women rider to perform a backside 900 (rider spins 900 degrees backside in the air).

2018 Paulette Jordan is the second Native American woman to serve in the legislature. Jordan has served two terms as an Idaho state representative.



Cherie Buckner-Webb