



U.S. EMBASSY DUBLIN

American Studies Newsletter
March 2010

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Women's History Month

"Empowering women to take greater control over their own destinies" – A theme articulated by Secretary of State Clinton on numerous occasions.

In March, the world observes **International Women's Day** and the United States observes Women's History Month. While women have made great strides in many areas where they once were marginalized, there is still much work to be done in areas including education, health and gender-based violence. [More](#)

Women's issues will be the "centerpiece of my term as secretary of state," Hillary Rodham Clinton told a gathering of female heads of state and foreign ministers September 24. "I have advocated for many years that women are the key to progress and prosperity around the world," Clinton told the guests, who were in New York City to participate in the opening of the 64th annual United Nations General Assembly. "There are people who say, well, women's issues are an important issue, but it doesn't rank up there with the Middle East or Iran's nuclear threat or Afghanistan and Pakistan. I could not disagree more. I think women are key to our being able to resolve all of those difficult conflicts, as well as provide for a better future," Clinton said. [America.gov](#)

Interesting Article

- **The Better Half: Helping Women Help the World.** Isobel Coleman. *Foreign Affairs, January/February 2010*: The author writes that "efforts to provide the world's women with economic and political power are more than just a worthy moral crusade: they represent perhaps the best strategy for pursuing development and stability across the globe." Coleman reviews Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn's new book, *Half the Sky*. [ARTICLE](#)

Facts for Features: [Women's History Month](#) (March 2010)

- 155.8 million females in the U.S. as of Oct. 1, 2009. Males: 151.8 million. [Population estimates](#)
- 55% of college students in fall 2008 were women. [School Enrollment in the U.S.: 2008](#)
- 66% of female citizens 18 and older reported voting in the 2008 Presidential election. 62% of their male counterparts cast a ballot. Additionally, 73 % of female citizens reported being registered to vote. [Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2008](#)
- 59% of females 16 and older participated in the labor force, representing about 72 million women. (2008) [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)

Links

- Official Site: [International Women's Day Site](#)
- [National Women's History Project](#) - 2010 Theme: Writing Women Back into History
- Dep. of State: [Office of Global Women's Issues](#)
- [Presidential Proclamation](#)
- [DipNote Blog: Global Women's Issues Channel](#)
- [United Nations Women Watch](#)
- [54th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women \(March 1 - March 12, 2010\)](#)

America.gov

- [People & Places page](#): Women's History
- Feature: [Helping Girls Stay in School](#)
- Feature: [Women of Courage](#)
- Publication: [Women of Influence](#)
- Photo Gallery: [Great Women of the 20th Century](#)
- Feature: [Oprah Winfrey Still Loves School](#)

America.gov Articles on Women in Afghanistan

- [Women Key to More Prosperous Afghanistan](#): Investment in women is the single most effective development strategy, and Afghanistan is no exception, says a State Department official, who outlines ways the Obama administration is working to promote women's rights in that country despite continuing obstacles.
- [U.S. Plan Would Help Afghan Women Build Better Lives](#): Empowering women is critical to improving life in Afghanistan. The Women's Action Plan for Afghanistan seeks to increase Afghan women's security, leadership in the public and private sectors, access to judicial institutions and services, and economic opportunities.



World Reflects on Women's Progress, Remaining Obstacles - Equal opportunity, health and gender-based violence remain issues

"If half of the world's population remains vulnerable to economic, political, legal and social marginalization, our hope of advancing democracy and prosperity will remain in serious jeopardy," [Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said](#). "We still have a long way to go, and the United States must remain an unambiguous and unequivocal voice in support of women's rights in every country, every region, on every continent."

The Obama White House has aggressively promoted women's issues both in the United States and abroad. Early in his presidency, President Obama created a new position at the White House — now held by Lynn Rosenthal — to advise the president and vice president on domestic violence and sexual assault issues in the United States. The president also created a new position at the U.S. Department of State: ambassador-at-large for global women's issues. Melanne Verveer, who has a long career working for the advancement of women, was appointed to that position to mobilize concrete support worldwide for women's rights and to combat [violence against women and girls](#) in all its forms.

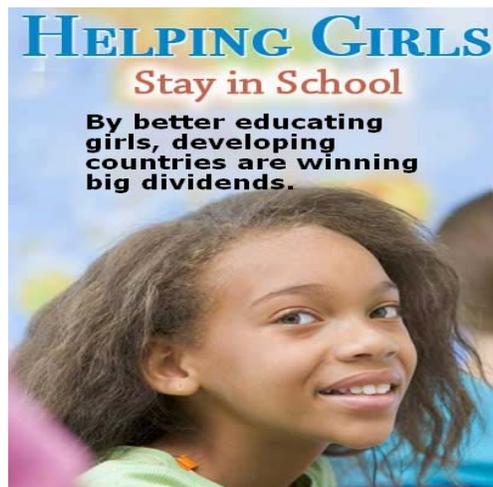
Clinton's focus on women's issues was underlined during her visit to [Africa](#) in 2009, where violence against women in conflict areas is a problem. There, she gave support to victims of gender-based violence and announced [aid programs](#) to help them. Later, in hailing a [U.N. Security Council resolution](#), Clinton emphasized that violence against women should not be viewed as an unfortunate characteristic of culture, but as a criminal offense.

In addition to ensuring that women around the world are safe from gender-based violence, the State Department under Clinton is focusing on promoting women's economic opportunities — from which other rights and freedoms often follow. [In remarks](#) before Congress in October 2009, Verveer said women in many parts of the world are "the drivers of economic growth" and tend to reinvest whatever income they can command into their families and communities.

"When women are accorded their rights and afforded [equal opportunities in education](#), health care and gainful employment, they drive social and economic progress," Clinton made clear in a [commentary](#) last summer.

In an impassioned speech at that U.N. conference (Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing), Clinton, who was first lady at the time, made her famous statement: "Human rights are women's rights; and women's rights are human rights."

[READ MORE \(America.gov Article\)](#)



The US Census



© U.S. Census Bureau

America.gov Article: [Looking for a Full Count in U.S. Census](#)

Interesting Factoid: In 1790, the first census was taken by 17 U.S. marshals on horseback and 200 assistants. The census counted 3.9 million people. Census 2000 counted more than 281 million people.

The 2000 Census

- U.S. Resident Population: 281,421,906
- Population per square mile of land area: 79.6

Countdown to Census Day: The "Population and Housing Census" will be taken on April 1, 2010. The 2010 Census aims to count all U.S. residents—citizens and non-citizens alike.

The Census is taken every ten years and is directed with counting the full population of the United States. The first census was taken in 1790 and estimated the population of the United States at 3,929,214. The 2010 Census will mark the 23rd census of the United States. The U.S. Census Bureau, which is running the 2010 Census and reports directly to the Secretary of Commerce, has to ensure everyone residing in the United States – in all 50 states, Washington, DC, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marian Islands, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands – are included in the 2010 Census. The Census Bureau will seek to determine the precise populations of each state on April 1, 2010. The secretary of Commerce then has until Dec. 31, 2010 to announce those population counts.

The U.S. Census counts every resident in the United States, and is required by the Constitution to take place every 10 years.

"The actual enumeration shall be made within three years after the first meeting of the Congress of the United States, and within every subsequent term of 10 years, in such manner as they shall by Law direct." -- Article I, Section 2 of the Constitution of the United States

Learn More at [2010 Census](#)

Literature

In celebration of Women's History Month, we are devoting our Literature section to women writers.

Little Women by Louisa May Alcott

Louisa May Alcott is best known for her creation of the classic work "Little Women", the story of four sisters growing up in a New England town during the mid 1800s.

"Louisa May Alcott had the good fortune to be raised by highly unconventional, literary-minded parents. Her mother was a pioneer in the women's suffrage and abolitionist movements, and her father was a transcendentalist philosopher and social reformer. Alcott's first and still best-known novel, *Little Women*, was an immediate popular success and continues to enjoy a wide readership. Largely based on her own childhood experiences, *Little Women* recounts the story of sisters Jo, Amy, Beth, Meg, and their mother, "Marmee" March. The March women must learn to fend for themselves when their father leaves home to fight in the Civil War. *Little Women* and Alcott have rallied generations of women who find strength in the love, support, and success of her dynamic female characters. Alcott would go on to write three follow-up novels about Jo March as well as numerous other novels, poetry, and nonfiction." [eNotes](#)

Teaching Resources on Little Women

eNotes: [Little Women - American History Through Literature](#)

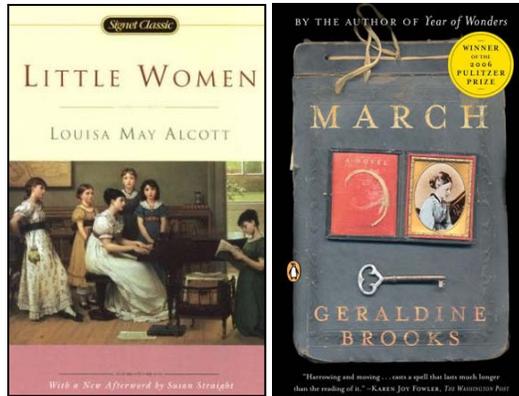
eNotes: [Little Women eText](#) and [Little Women Study Guide](#)

eNotes: [Louisa May Alcott - Critical Survey of Long Fiction](#)

Spark Notes: [Little Women](#) | BookRags: [Little Women](#)

March by Geraldine Brooks

"From Louisa May Alcott's beloved classic *Little Women*, Geraldine Brooks has taken the character of the absent father, March, who has gone off to war leaving his wife and daughters. To evoke him, Brooks turned to the journals and letters of Bronson Alcott, Louisa May's father, a friend and confidant of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau. In Brooks' telling, March emerges as an idealistic chaplain in the little known backwaters of a war that will test his faith in himself and in the Union cause as he learns that his side, too, is capable of acts of barbarism and racism. As he recovers from a near mortal illness, he must reassemble his shattered mind and body, and find a way to reconnect with a wife and daughters who have no idea of the ordeals he has been through. From the vibrant intellectual world of New England and the sensuous antebellum South, March adds adult resonance to Alcott's optimistic children's tale and portrays the moral complexity of war, a marriage tested by the demands of extreme idealism, and by the temptations of a powerful forbidden attraction." Taken from [Geraldine Brooks's Official Website](#)



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Interesting Factoid

Acclaimed CNN journalist Christiane Amanpour on the fictional character she identifies with: “Jo in the novel “Little Women,” by Louisa May Alcott, because sometimes I feel I belong to a different era, but also Jo was a girl but she was ballsy.” ([NYT Magazine](#))

Links on March

- [Readers Guide](#)
- [Geraldine Brooks talks about the book](#)
- NPR Interview: [Geraldine Brooks](#)
- eNotes: [March](#) | BookRags: [March](#)
- Powells's Books: [Interview](#)

Read an Excerpt

“This is what I write to her: The clouds tonight embossed the sky. A dipping sun gilded and brazed each raveling edge as if the firmament were threaded through with precious filaments.”

[Excerpt](#) © Barnes & Noble

Women Writers - Links

- [Resources for Teaching: Women Writers](#): Explores how literature written by women can be taught effectively in secondary and postsecondary educational settings. (DePaul University)
- [Women Writers](#): Commentary on women writers from 1800 to the present, with extensive annotated links to other sites. (By Kim Wells)
- [A Celebration of Women Writers](#) recognizes the contributions of women writers throughout history. Attempt to provide easy access to available on-line information. (By Mary Mark)

In Focus

St. Patrick's Day & Irish-American Heritage Month

“St. Patrick's Day might be one of the world's most celebrated holidays, with city-sponsored festivities held in Japan, Australia, Canada, Malaysia, Great Britain and the U.S. as well as Ireland. That geography reflects the broad dispersion of Irish, through choice or necessity, in a 300-year, globe-spanning migration. But perhaps in no other adopted nation is the Irish presence felt as keenly as in the United States, where an ethnic holiday has expanded to embrace all Americans.” (America.gov)

[Article](#))

Proclamation by the President - [Irish-American Heritage Month 2010](#)

Did you know?

The world's first St. Patrick's Day parade occurred on March 17, 1762, in New York City, featuring Irish soldiers serving in the English military. This parade became an annual event, with President Truman attending in 1948. Congress proclaimed March as Irish-American Heritage Month in 1995, and the President issues a proclamation each year. [more](#)



American Citizenship

[This book](#) depicts American citizens exercising the many rights and privileges that empower them to participate fully in the nation's political, economic, and cultural life.

Young Generation



PEW: [The Millennials: Confident. Connected. Open to Change](#)

"Generations, like people, have personalities, and Millennials -- the American teens and twenty-somethings who are making the passage into adulthood at the start of a new millennium -- have begun to forge theirs: confident, self-expressive, liberal, upbeat and open to change. They are more ethnically and racially diverse than older adults. They're less religious, less likely to have served in the military, and are on track to become the most educated generation in American history. [...] Who are they? How are they different? How might they reshape America in the future? The Pew Research Center sets out to answer these questions in a [yearlong series](#) of original reports that explore the behaviors, values and opinions of the Millennials." [More](#)

The Quiz: [How Millennial are You](#)



Webchats & Webcasts

<http://www.america.gov/multimedia/askamerica.html>

Information Resource Center

Office of Public Affairs, U.S. Embassy, 42 Elgin Road, Dublin 4

Email: ircdublin@state.gov

Telephone: (01) 668 8777 ext. 2100/2106, Fax: (01) 668 9184

Internet: <http://dublin.usembassy.gov>