

### **Goals of the Women's History Trail:**

- Celebrate the lives of Macon County women and honor their accomplishments.
- Let residents and visitors “walk in her steps” – experiencing history in a deeper, more personal way.
- Weave together the disparate elements of our history: Native American, White, Black; those of all levels of society; those of pioneer stock and those more recently arrived.
- Add to the beauty and interest of the Town – create an attraction and a deeper sense of identity.

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### **History:**

At each critical point in our history, women stepped forward to participate in unique and remarkable ways – and these provide us with themes to explore on the Trail.

- Early Contact
  - Cherokee
  - Pioneer
- Civil War
  - Peace
  - Industry
- WWI / WWII
  - 20s
  - 30s-40s

### **Significant themes in local women's history:**

- Native women: leaders in a matriarchal society
- Time of contact: Cherokee women during Tribe's struggle to remain in homeland
- Pioneer women: Tough, multi-faceted, skilled, nurturing, hospitable
- Slave women: Mostly anonymous and unsung; struggling, enduring, triumphing
- Women during war: Taking care of the home front (Civil War, WWI, WWII: all these pivotal times created major social change)
- After Civil War: Supporting selves and families; taking over the role of teacher
- Women entrepreneurs
- Industrialization: Women joining workforce in larger numbers
- Stepping up: Voting, working for change, networking, moving into government jobs, holding office

### ***Groups of Women:***

*The Healers*  
*The Educators*  
*Working Women: Mica Workers*  
*Entrepreneurs: Milliners of Main Street; female shop owners*  
*The Artists: Those whose lives celebrated beauty and craft*  
*Social Welfare Workers*  
*Black Women*  
*Innkeepers and Restaurateurs*  
*The Librarians*  
*The Storytellers, History Keepers*

## Remarkable Individuals:

Numerous Macon County women stand out and deserve recognition either because of their own unique accomplishments or because they help us understand better the lives of other women of their time. These are examples:

- Mary Bell: her vivid letters to her husband Alf drive home the challenges and opportunities women faced in those difficult days
- Elizabeth and Lassie Kelly – sisters: a foremost educator; a lawyer and businesswoman
- Laura Jones: early female force in local development, real estate
- Arabella Johnson: newspaper publisher during World War II
- Margaret Bryson: a graduate nurse and nursing pioneer; entered Army in WWI as Lieut.
- Margaret Redding Siler: came into the community as a bride; embraced it and set about preserving its history and folklore, telling its stories.

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### **Powerful points of intersection:** (possible sites)

- Nikwasi Mound and the proposed Heritage Trail (Nikwasi to Cowee and beyond)
- Little Tennessee River Greenway (History flowed north-south along the river)
- Route of Great Western Turnpike, along which history flowed, east to west
- Ray's Chapel, St. Cyprian's – telling our Black History
- Downtown Franklin
  - Scottish Tartans Museum: opportunity to explore the role of women in the Cherokee trade, as most traders married into the Tribe
  - Macon County Historical Museum: many avenues to explore; venue for exhibits on particular significant themes
  - Original site of Maco Crafts: WNC Craft Trail
  - The square and its public gardens

# Women's History Trail

## FRANKLIN, NC



*Walking in Her Steps...  
A way to bring history to life*

Women's History Trail Concept  
By Barbara McRae

Project adopted by the Folk Heritage  
Association of Macon County

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