

Welcome to week 4 of Women's History Month

"Discrimination is discrimination, and it's wrong, whether you're a woman or a chicken."

– Ingrid Newkirk

PETA Founder and President

This week we're shining the spotlight on a few of the many amazing women who played a major role in the history of animal welfare and advocacy.

Women have always been at the forefront of animal rights and anti-cruelty movements throughout history, with many being the founders of animal organizations and humane societies over the past 150+ years.

[Battersea Dogs & Cats Home](#) was founded in 1860 by Mary Tealby and is one of the oldest established animal organizations in the UK. Originally called The Battersea Home for Dogs, the idea of a dedicated animal shelter was considered odd and radical at the time and Tealby faced much criticism, as well as some [popular - and famous - support](#). Tealby is considered by many as the [founder of the modern animal rescue](#).

[Caroline Earle White](#) was one of the earliest woman leaders to help establish one of the earliest humane societies or SPCAs in the United States. She co-founded Pennsylvania SPCA in 1868 after being inspired and advised by Henry Bergh, founder of the ASPCA. In response to her and other women being excluded from positions at the organization due to their gender, White founded the Women's Humane Society (aka Women's Pennsylvania Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals or WPSPCA) in 1869. She advocated against dogfighting, cockfighting, and other animal blood sports. In 1883 she founded the American Anti-Vivisection Society after receiving a shocking request for WPSPCA to relinquish unwanted dogs from their shelter for medical experimental purposes.

In 1881 the Connecticut Humane Society was founded by a high school senior named [Gertrude O. Lewis](#). Three years later, the SPCA LA (in New Orleans, LA) was founded by [Eliza Poitevent Holbrook Nicholson](#), owner and manager of the New Orleans Daily Tribune.

Two of the four founders of the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) in 1954 were women: [Marcia Glaser and Helen Jones](#).

British animal activist [Ruth Plant](#) pioneered the practice of trap-neuter-return in the 1950's.

In 1986, [Lorri Houston](#) co-founded [Farm Sanctuary](#), America's first shelter for farm animals.

Jo-Anne McArthur and Keri Cronin launched [The Unbound Project](#), a multimedia project that "celebrates contemporary and historic women at the forefront of animal advocacy worldwide."

And of course, there's our very own [Ethel H. Tompkins](#), who founded Marin Humane in December 1907.



Although the animal protection world is predominantly female, men still dominate the leadership roles, even today. One notable exception until recently was [Ingrid Newkirk](#) who has overseen PETA since she co-founded the organization in 1980. This, fortunately, is changing - HSUS and American Humane's CEOs are women (Kitty Block and Robin Ganzert, respectively,) and we are seeing more and more women as Executive Directors or CEOs for humane societies and/or SPCAs in North America (including our own Nancy McKenney!).

The list of prominent and influential women goes on and on! Read more about some of these figures and how women are intertwined in the history of animal rights, welfare, and advocacy: [17 Women Making History for Animals, Past and Present](#)
[Women and the History of Animal Advocacy](#)

"We should remember in our dealings with animals that they are a sacred trust to us from our Heavenly Father. They are dumb and cannot speak for themselves."

– Harriet Beecher Stowe
Author and abolitionist

Maureen Reyes

She/Her/Hers

Development Coordinator and DEIJ Committee Co-Chair

Pet Parent to Mordred & Nimue

415.506.6231 Direct

415.883.4621 Campus

171 Bel Marin Keys Blvd.

Novato, CA 94949

Tax ID #94-1156562