



They Dared to Dream: Florida Women Who Shaped History

Doris Weatherford

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“Well-crafted and in-depth, *They Dared to Dream* has moved women, their experiences, and their contributions to the forefront of Florida’s history and heritage. This is a long-overdue and much-needed turning point in understanding our state’s past and present.”—Canter Brown Jr., coeditor of *The Varieties of Women’s Experiences*

“Represents a leap forward in the study of Florida history. Weatherford has done an outstanding job of researching and writing about Florida women, from paupers to queens, elevating their status to a level of equality within the overall story of Florida.”—Rodney Kite-Powell, Saunders Foundation Curator of History at the Tampa Bay History Center and editor of *Tampa Bay History*

“Exhaustively researched, well written, and engaging, *They Dared to Dream* breaks new ground in the study of Florida. Doris Weatherford’s ambitious history of women in Florida will be widely read and discussed. From Princess Ulele to Alex Sink, from the role of *criollas* in Colonial St. Augustine to the struggles of women in the twenty-first century, Weatherford chronicles their lives in the Sunshine State.”—Gary Mormino, author of *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams*

In this extensive portrayal of Florida’s guiding matriarchs, Doris Weatherford highlights the myriad contributions women have made throughout Florida’s history. From the select few who traveled with Ponce de Leon to the state’s first female mayor Marion H. O’Brien, Weatherford sheds light on the roles these pioneering women played in the shaping of the Sunshine State.

They Dared to Dream reveals the lifestyles and achievements of women throughout landmark moments in history, including Native civilizations before the arrival of European colonists; early Spanish, British, and French exploration, the Civil War era, Reconstruction, the early twentieth century, and the population explosions post-World War II. Featuring often-celebrated personalities—including Mary Martha Reid, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton—alongside the lesser-known lives of Princess Murat, lighthouse keeper Barbara Mabrity, Florida Memorial College founder Sarah Ann Blocker, and others—this pivotal examination of Florida’s female agents of change draws attention to women’s instrumental roles in the historical events that defined the Sunshine State.

From prehistoric times to the space age, the female half of the population has made giant, but too often unacknowledged, contributions to Florida history. Countless women have overcome great obstacles and yet are often left out of historical accounts. *They Dared to Dream* aims to fill in some of these gaps by celebrating the many successes women have made. Because without women, there is no history—nor any future.

Doris Weatherford is the author of *A History of the American Suffragist Movement* and other reference guides on American women’s history. **The Florida Commission on the Status of Women Foundation, Inc.**, is dedicated to empowering women and girls in our state by supporting educational, entrepreneurial and self sufficiency programs and initiatives through grants, mentoring, and other opportunities. The FCSW

Foundation supports the work and programs of the Florida Commission on the Status of Women, including the Florida Women's Hall of Fame.

The Florida Commission on the Status of Women Foundation, Inc. dedicates this book to:

the women of the past who struggled to achieve gender equality and showed the path, the women of the present who continue with the same goal, and the women of the future who will carry the baton and make us proud.—Dr. Mona Jain

Acknowledgments, by the Florida Commission on the Status of Women Foundation, Inc

The Florida women's history book project could not have been completed without the cooperation and support of many people. To thank all of them who made it possible would be nearly impossible. We would, however, like to express our sincere appreciation to those who have helped take this endeavor "from dream to reality."

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We gratefully acknowledge Doris Weatherford for writing this comprehensive Florida women's history book. We are also grateful to the University Press of Florida for publishing the book as well as for valuable editorial help and comments.

Our special thanks to each and every one who played a part in discovering the stories behind the women that makes them unique and trailblazers. These notable women have created history. We are also thankful to many women and men for their well wishes and encouragement in order to fill a void in the history of the Sunshine State. Together we empower each other.

Last but not least the foundation members offer our deepest sense of appreciation to our families for believing in us as well as for their unwavering moral support.

To all others we have omitted inadvertently, please accept our sincere apologies and thanks. According to the old saying, "To err is human and to forgive is divine."

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