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## Illinois State Museum Announces Women's History Series and Trail

Walk in the Footsteps of Illinois Women and Listen to Their Stories

**SPRINGFIELD, Ill.:** As part of Women’s History Month, the Illinois State Museum (ISM) today announced the launch of its “In Her Footsteps Series” beginning this March through June. Each program in the series will occur online on the fourth Tuesday of the month from 6:30-7:00 p.m.

The series will feature Illinois women and their contributionsto history, culture, and society. Its aim is to encourage Illinoisans to learn more about women’s history in their region and perhaps travel, virtually or in person, to learn more about their stories.

“The ‘In Her Footsteps Series’ is a chance for the Illinois State Museum to tell stories of women who called Illinois home,” said ISM Director of Interpretation Jennifer Edginton. “We’re focusing on women whom you may have heard of before, but not sure how exactly you heard of them. We’re telling diverse stories that bring to life the dynamic history of Illinois.”

Additionally, the Museum will include each of these women and other female historical figures on its new “In Her Footsteps Illinois Women’s History Trail” website scheduled to launch in May. The website will pinpoint locations across the state connected to women who have contributed to Illinois history. It will summarize each woman’s story and provide information on historic sites and markers that the public can visit.

**Featured women in the** “In Her Footsteps Series” include:

**Program 1 |  Annie M. Turnbo Pope Malone | Tuesday, March 23 at 6:30 p.m. Central**

Born to formerly enslaved parents in Metropolis, IL, and orphaned as a young child, Annie M. Turnbo Pope Malone developed a cosmetics and educational empire that made her one of the first Black self-made millionaires in America - and launched the career of her employee, Madam C.J. Walker. Linda M. Nance, founding president of the Annie Malone Historical Society, will dicuss the life and legacy of Malone.

**Program 2 |  The Radium Girls of Ottawa, IL | Tuesday, April 27 at 6:30 p.m. Central**

The young women who worked at the Radium Dial Company in the 1920s were told the radium they were using to paint clock faces was harmless. Encouraged to use their lips to give their brushes a fine point, these women contracted radiation poisoning, and their health suffered terribly. ISM Curator of History Erika Holst will discuss the fascinating and tragic tale of the brave factory workers whose quest for justice forever changed the United States labor laws.

**Program 3 |  Mother Jones | Tuesday, May 25 at 6:30 p.m. Central**

Mary Harris Jones, better known as Mother Jones, overcame great adversity in her life to fight for the rights of the working class. An Irish immigrant who suffered the tragic loss of her family and business, Jones organized strikes and demonstrations across the country and co-founded the Industrial Workers of the World. Eventually, she became known as “the most dangerous woman in America.”

**Program 4 |  Ida B. Wells** **| Tuesday, June 22 at 6:30 p.m. Central**

Ida B. Wells-Barnett gained national recognition for her journalistic investigations of lynching in the American south. She eventually moved to Chicago due to increasing threats and the eventual destruction of her newspaper, the *Free Speech*. In Chicago, she continued her activism despite racial and sexist prejudice, working with others to found many civil rights organizations, including the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). ISM Director of Interpretation Jennifer Edginton will discuss Ida B. Wells-Barnett’s life as an investigative journalist, civil rights activist, and suffragist.

For registration information, visit [**www.illinoisstatemuseum.org/content/upcoming-events**](http://www.illinoisstatemuseum.org/content/upcoming-events)**.**

**About the Illinois State Museum**

Established in 1877, the Illinois State Museum is a dynamic institution that inspires the exploration of Illinois' past and present to inform and enrich everyday life and promote stewardship of cultural and natural resources. Headquartered in Springfield with branch facilities in Lewistown and Lockport, ISM is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums and a proud member of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience. Learn more at [www.illinoisstatemuseum.org](http://www.illinoisstatemuseum.org).

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