



Mary Ritter Beard

Indianapolis, Marion County

August 5, 1876 – August 14, 1958

Mary Ritter Beard attended public schools in Indianapolis, before enrolling at DePauw University. While there, she met and later married Charles Austin Beard, an influential economic historian. Mary and her husband collaborated on several works. As historians, they both belonged to a movement that argued that social and economic factors were significant drivers of history. Their monumental history of the American nation, *The Rise of the American Civilization*, has shaped the thinking of generations of Americans.

Mary was also one of the first female historians and one of the first historians to focus on women in America. Mary became involved in women's suffrage while attending graduate school at Columbia University. She joined the National American Woman Suffrage Association. In 1913, she co-founded the Congressional Union for Women Suffrage.

While involved in politics, Mary published two books - *Women's Work in Municipalities* (1915) and *A Short History of the American Labor Movement* (1921). Her most important historical contributions were her later works: *On Understanding Women* (1931), *America Through Women's Eyes* (1933), and *Women as Force in History* (1946). These three works challenged the widely held viewpoint that the rise of the American and global civilization had been solely accomplished by men. She argued that historians cannot overlook women's indispensable role in the advance of civilization.

Mary Ritter Beard died in 1958, but her works helped open the way for women's history scholars in the following decades to turn women's history into a respected field of study.

For more information about Mary Ritter Beard, go to:

<https://www.nwhm.org/education-resources/biography/biographies/mary-ritter-beard/>.

For more information about *Writing Her Story*, go to:

<http://www.in.gov/icw/2440.htm>.

Photo: Dweck, Carol and Rachel Simmons (30 July 2014). *Why Women Fail*.

Retrieved from: <http://www.cnn.com/2014/07/29/opinion/dweck-simmons-girls-confidence-failure/>.


Writing Her Story
31 Women in 31 Days

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