



# DEI *Perspectives*

## Women's History Month

**By: DEI Champion**

In March, we celebrate Women's History Month. As someone who attended a university that used to be for women only – this changed in the 80s when my mother attended – there were many classes that focused on women's history. I even had a required class on Women in Art for my art minor. But in my programming classes and other computing classes, I didn't learn about Ada Lovelace, the "first computer programmer," Margaret Hamilton, who coined the phrase "software engineer" or Grace Hopper, the first to create an English-language compiler. I know about the women in computing because of social media posts I saw during Women's History Month or watching movies like "Hidden Figures." Knowing how many women are left out of the history books shows us how important Women's History Month is.

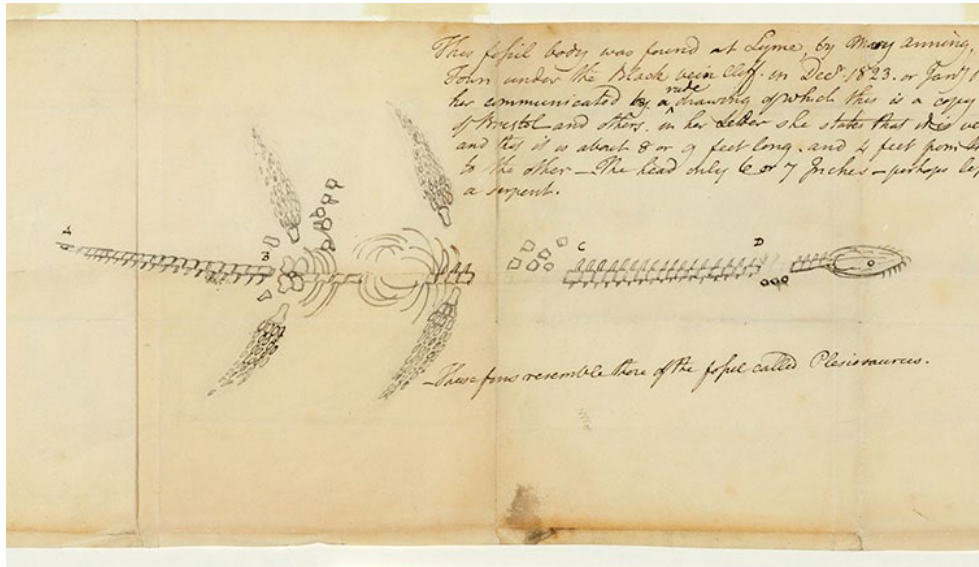


*Margaret Hamilton in 1969 standing beside listings of the software she developed alongside her team for the Apollo program's Lunar Module and Command Module.*

One of my favorite women in history is one I found because we're birthday twins. Mary Anning was a pioneer in the paleontology field. She unearthed the first Ichthyosaur at only 12 years old! In 1823, Mary was the first to discover the complete skeleton of a Plesiosaurus, and in 1828, Mary discovered the first Pterosaur outside of Germany. Sadly, though, she did not often receive recognition for her work. Male scientists would buy her fossils and not credit her findings in their scientific papers. Even the Geological Society of London refused to admit her in spite of her numerous fossil finds. In fact, they didn't admit women at all until 1904, many years after Mary's death from breast cancer in 1847. The area where she collected fossils is now part of the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site, and in 2022, a statue of Mary was finally erected outside the Lyme Regis Museum, which displays some of her collection, after a four-year campaign started by 11-year-old Evie Swire.



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Mary Anning's sketch of her first Plesiosaur.

A year after Mary's passing, in 1848, the first Women's Rights Convention was held in Seneca Falls, New York. Women's Rights National Historical Park tells the story of their struggles for civil rights, human rights and equality, while these global struggles continue today. The conference was attended by notable figures in the women's suffrage movement, including Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony and Lucretia Mott. At this event, they wrote the Declaration of Sentiments, a defining document for the Women's Rights Movement, which declared, "all men and women are created equal." It also listed the many ways women were disenfranchised and degraded. While it took many years for many of these statements to be resolved in the U.S., many women are still fighting for these same rights abroad.

In recent years, women have continued to break down barriers and experience historic firsts! Women are really making strides in sports. A few recent Super Bowl champion teams have women on their coaching crews. The Seattle Kraken brought the first full-time female coach to the league when they hired Jessica Campbell. Many women's sport leagues are expanding. In Pittsburgh, the city is founding a women's soccer team called the Riveters. In addition, big cities are opening sports bars exclusively geared toward women's sport. While the whole world is watching women's sports, we hope to see women held with the same regard, treatment and pay as men. Tennis was the first sport to offer equal prize money to both women and men thanks to the great efforts of Billie Jean King, but equal pay for women still has a long way to go in many places.

From the courts to the office, there are still many strides to be made, and I can't wait to see how much further we've come by next Women's History Month!

**Learn more about Women's History Month:** <https://www.womenshistorymonth.gov/>