

Mercy Otis Warren

1728—1814



WHY SHE MADE HISTORY Mercy Otis Warren was an American writer who believed that women should have the same rights as men. She wrote many political plays that expressed her feelings on liberty and government.



As you read the biography below, think about the confidence it took Mercy Otis Warren to publish her satirical plays.



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Mercy Otis Warren was born in Massachusetts into an upper-class family. Though her brothers attended Harvard, Mercy Otis Warren was self-educated, as were all women of her time. She read often and involved herself in political discussion with her father and brother.

Warren became what was known as a Patriot writer. She wrote plays and poetry that expressed her views and feelings about America. She anonymously published one of her satirical plays, *The Adulateur*, which described the governor as a villain who preyed upon the colony. Mercy Otis Warren's writings were Antifederalist, and were often veiled attacks on public officials or politicians.

Mercy Otis Warren married James Warren in 1754. At twenty-six, Warren was a much older bride than most women of her time, which is often attributed to her independence.

James Warren was a speaker of the Massachusetts House of Representatives. Thanks to her husband, Mercy Otis Warren met many important people in America during that time. She communicated by letters with such figures as Benjamin Franklin,

Thomas Jefferson, Abigail Adams, and many others. Warren also urged leaders of the Revolution to include women's equal rights in the Constitution.

Mercy Otis Warren was the author of hundreds of poems, plays, and letters during the Revolution. She strongly believed in equality, independence, and liberty. Warren's talent with the written word has left historians with insightful commentary on America during its formative years.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

1. Recall What was the purpose of Mercy Otis Warren's satirical plays?

2. Contrast In what ways has the United States changed for women's rights since Warren's time?

ACTIVITY

3. Think about a current event or person that you know about. Write a short story or character sketch (1-2 paragraphs) that uses satire to describe this person or event. Use what you have learned about Mercy Otis Warren's satirical plays, to create your character or story.