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Some of history's first Mathematicians

I won't begin this essay with how much I love math, because realistically it is my least favored subject. I praise those who do so boldly love math, I wish I were able to but literature is where my heart lies. Though it isn't my favorite, I do find interesting things about it, especially in the rare moments that I am able to fully comprehend and understand it. What truly fascinates me though, are the ones who thoroughly understand it and have a love for it, mathematicians per se. As woman usually get a bad rep for being “ditzy” or “not capable," I find the first of the woman mathematicians to be particularly interesting so I have chosen to discuss the few of the first for this essay.

Math is as old as the day is long, it documents back to roughly around c. 200 and it is always being reinvented. One of the first woman mathematicians was from modern day Egypt c. 370-415, her name was Hypatia. Though her work can no longer be found she is still considered one of the first female mathematicians. Hypatia based her work on that of Plotinus, whom founded Iamblichus and Neoplatonism. Though most commonly known for her joint work with her father and his eleven-part commentary. Through the documentation of others, you can read about her work because it is used as reference in their new works.

A more famously known name is that of Florence Nightingale, which will be the topic of this next paragraph. We look at Florence mostly as the founder of modern nursing but what we don't play on when discussing her is the fact that she was a mathematician. Though so much of nursing is widely known as going hand in hand with math such as medication, charting, and everything in between. With Nightingales’ mathematic skill she was able to reduce the mortality rate through statistics. She also went on to create easy to read graphs and charts for the politicians to interpret and understand. She was able to show how the soldiers were dying from the conditions of the hospital and not the cause of fighting. Her charts and graphs were important and due to this importance, there was an image placed on the back of one of the British notes.

After reviewing and researching the first ladies of mathematics I feel it is safe to say to never underestimate a woman. Woman are creatures of many talents and it is amazing to me how often that is diluted but math doesn't lie. So, it is seen here how these two, out of many, fascinating woman left footprints in the stepping stones of modern day mathematics. Gender really has no bounds when playing on brains and the quality of a human as well as the abilities they may carry.

Work Citied:

1. <http://www.mathscareers.org.uk/article/five-famous-female-mathematicians/>
2. <http://www-history.mcs.st-andrews.ac.uk/Biographies/Hypatia.html>
3. <http://www-history.mcs.st-andrews.ac.uk/Biographies/Nightingale.html>